A Brief Study of Modern Literature of travel.

CHAPTER VI.

Full Blossoming

Literature of Travel about Europe and U.S.A. between 1920 and 1940.

It is the age of giants, gifted men with individualistic tendencies, each carving a new technique and finding a new path in life; one common characteristic of the literature of this period is restlessness, and love of experiment. D.H. Lawrence is a representative figure of this intellectual restlessness, and search for new values in life. He travels because he cannot rest. Dreiser studies places and cities with scientific concentration and full analysis as if the subject were some living, moving, acting organism. J.B. Priestley applies the journalistic method to travel literature, but he is never journalistic in spirit. Orwell brings a new austerity and simplicity to the literature of travel. He lays bare the truth by removing all the trappings of language; Walter Starkie goes roaming among the gypsies with a guitar like George Borrow of old. Hemingway invents a new powerful primitive earthy style to paint the forces of life, love, and suffering; language becomes rapier sharp in his hands. Rebecca West makes a fine book out of her journalistic tour of the Balkans. All these writers represent the heights of the modern literature of travel. They have all a suppressed romanticism, but they do not follow Stevenson or others; they are truly modern. Mark Twain, and Thoreau are completely forgotten by this time. Books about England have fine beauty of ey style, and form, and above all the beauty of sentiments which gives it a charming colour. Books of modiocre merit
too appeared they are steeped in the modern spirit. It is truly the period of full blossoming.

A. The Giants

D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930).


D.H. Lawrence truly represents the new restless age of travel— he travels because he cannot rest, he goes to other lands because he has no land of his own, it is a morbid sickly stage of travel, leaving the calm and peaceful life of England, and dwelling in the adobe hut of Mexico smelling of perspiration, blood, and urine. There is something nauseating and repulsive, something deeply torn with doubt and uncertainty; contradiction is quite common in these books of travel because they are reflections of passing moods. He has vigour and force poetic ardour and lyrical out-pouring; yet over emphasis and repetition has a discordant effect, and the books are not so well constructed and so finely written as is often supposed by his enthusiastic admirers. He condemns society and turns to primitive and secluded parts of the world, but that is no permanent solution of the problems of life. His thirst for the exotic and the untried never really satisfied his thirst. But he was in a way a really great and representative figure of his time. He represents the stage in European civilisation when men travel neither for delight nor for information, even old Francis Bacon would be shocked to find that his essay on travel does not cover these new creatures of circumstance. They travel because they have so peace at home, no calm in
at home, no calm in the heart; they rush out like mad-men and
do not know where they are going.

"Dio, Dio, I am so ridiculous wavering between East and
West". 1

"The era of love and oneness is over. The era of world
alike should be at an end. The other tide has set in. Men will
set their bonnets at one another now, and fight themselves into
separation and sharp distinction. The day of peace and the one­
ness is over; the day of great fight into multifariousness is
at hand". 2

But Horace remarked, "Caelum non animun, mutant qui
trans mare current". He crossed many seas and many lands running
like a hunted animal, but where-ever he went his mind was soon
restless, seeking yet another flight and escape; at every sojourn,
the story was the same, at first enchantment, then disillusionment.
Perhaps Sea and Sardinia, illustrates this conflict best of all;
he is enchanted by the new virility and simplicity of life.
At Cagliari at the Scala di Ferro, the people seem warm and
good natured like human beings, every-thing rouses him to
raptures.

"But it still reminds of Malta, lost between Europe and
Africa and belonging to no-where. Belonging to no-where, never
having belonged to anywhere. To Spain, and the Arabs and the
Phoenicians most. But as if it never really had a fate. No
fate, left outside of time and history". 3

But by the end of forty-eight hours he is in a fury of
rage at the foulness and squalor of his bed-room at Sargono. 4
The same story of delight and disgust is told in all his stories
of racial love; and love of land, the Aztecs and Polynesian
whom he admired soon became most intolerable creatures.

2. Ibid., p. 135.
3. Ibid., p. 54.
4. Ibid., p. 130.
Twilight in Italy is not at all a suitable title for this book which has much more of sunlight than twilight in it. Moreover it deals not only with Italy but also Bavaria, Switzerland and Austrian Tyrol. Moreover it was written during those happy days of 1912 when he eloped with Frieda Von Richthofen. The Austrian and Bavarian part of the journey was recorded in many different forms, and these versions appeared in Westminster Gazette (March 22, 1913), the Fortune, the Atlantic Monthly and the Phoenix. A slightly fictionalised form of this journey appeared as 'A Chapel among the Mountains' and 'A Hay hut among the mountains'.

This book has nothing to do with the history and politics of Italy; he was never an intellectual snob and his sympathy was with the peasants and workers. These are poetical travel sketches, and there are curious mystical passages; the moods of terrible conflict which appeared later in Sea and Sardinia and Mornings in Mexico and also in the novels - especially Kangaroo - are yet far off, though here and there the shadows do appear.

The finest passages are those which describe the beauty of nature.

"In the autumn the little rosy cyclamen blossom in the shade of this west side of the lake. They are very cold and fragrant, and their scent seems to belong to Greece, to the Bacthaei. They are real flowers of the past. They seem to be blossoming in the landscape of Phaedra and Helen. They bend down, they brood like little chill fires. They are little living myths that I cannot understand". 1

The book is much calmer and more balanced than this later out-pourings of a wounded heart; they have beauty of language but no serenity; they have a rush of words and ideas, but there is no stability.

SEA AND SARDINIA- 1923.

Lawrence wrote books of two types- the long concentrated book over which he laboured for years or book thrown off in a spirit of inspiration and hardly retouched at all. The Sea and Sardinia, is a typical book of the second type. The whole action of Sea and Sardinia occurred between 4th and 10th of February, 1921, and the book itself was written within six weeks wholly from memory, without a single note. It depicts his special quality, namely that he experiences and remembers more vividly than other men, and without any straining is able to pass on his experiences to others in words so appropriate and felicitous that Lawrence's experiences become the readers'.

The book is the product of restlessness and bitterness, Lawrence were expelled from Cornwall in October, 1917, the prosecution of the J Rainbow in 1915 and had already upset him; then the war broke out and they were suspected of being German spies, and they were not allowed to leave the country till November, 1919. Thus he left for Italy in 1920, with sufficient money in the pocket, and terrible hatred for England in his heart. He went to Sardinia just to go to the wildest part where there should be so civilization, it is a fine portrait of himself as he was in 1920.

Sea and Sardinia is a lovely book, but it seethes with weak and childish contradictions. He wrote just as he felt, and he felt as he wrote. If the feelings were inconsistent and contradictory it made no difference to him. Insipid of his weaknesses, it is a book that moves, that delights the reader with the sheer lyrical power; it gives most vivid
pictures of the scenes and sights of that land, beauty and ugliness both become clear, he found nothing common or dull in the world. He has a deep interest in the common humanity standing between the sea and the mountains.

"Humanity is externally too much it alike. Internally there are insuperable differences. So we sit and think watching the people at the station like a line of fascinating caricatures between oneself and the make sea, and the uneasy clouding dawn". 1

But no detail is too dull to escape his observation at Cagliari, Mandas, Sargo, Nuroro, and Terranova; he gives all details about peasants and their customs and interests. But here again the finest passages are about the beauties of nature.

"The lovely dawn; the lovely pure wide morning in the mid sea, so golden aired and delighted with the sea like sequins shaking, and the sky far far above unfathomably clear. How glad to be on a ship, what a golden hour for the heart of man. Ah if one could sail for ever, on a small quiet lonely ship from land to land and isle to isle, and saunter through the spaces of the lovely world". 2

The book is of equal beauty throughout; but it is the beauty seen by a man who escaped from bondage, and delights in the mere free movements of the body. It is the beauty seen by a man that is turned abnormal, nervous, and bitter with persecution, injustice and hatred. One feature of the book is its redeeming purity; he no more throws that sexy stuff into this travelogue, he is now no more posing as a priest of passion, in that respect it is his sincerest book.

2. Ibid. p. 69.
When he decided to go to America he was not sure about the attitude of the Americans, he hoped to be accepted as the leader of a new social and cultural movement. He was already praising the Aztecs and Red Indians, Marquesans and Maoris. He started from Italy in the spring of 1922 to journey to America by way of Ceylon and Australia; he never visited India because in India he would have met mystics with far older systems and ways of thought, worshippers of Phallus and the Female organ; with their logic and tricks of metaphysics they would have either converted him or confounded him; he was not bold enough to risk a challenge.

His novel *Kangaroo* was written in Australia.

"Kangaroo is a chaotic book. It has many passages of great descriptive beauty, but internally it is a chaos. It is also the last of Lawrence's novels in which he himself is the chief character. This for obvious reasons. The internal chaos of Kangaroo is the internal chaos of Richard Lovat Somers, who is Lawrence. It is impossible that he should be a character any more. He is exploded in fragments". 1

From Sydney he went to New Zealand, and touching at the south sea islands he reached San Francisco, from where he very quickly went to California and New Mexico; during this single journey his dreams about the glorious blood of Marquesans and the primitive Paradise of Polynesia were completely shattered.

"We can't go back. We can't go back to the savages. We can be in sympathy with them. We can take a great curve in their direction, onwards, but we cannot turn the current of our life backwards, back towards their soft warm twilight and uncreate mud. Not for a moment. If we do it for a moment it makes us sick". 2

"Mornings in Mexico" should be read in conjunction with his novel Plumed Serpent because the Mornings was made out of the spare material in his diary, and a number of articles written at that time are not included in the Mornings in Mexico, but they are found in the 'Phoenix'. The first four sketches in the book - 'Oroamin and the Parrots', 'Walk to Huayapa', 'The Zoo', 'The Market Day', were written in Oaxaca ('Yanaka'). These four sketches of life in that remote part of Mexico show us Lawrence at his sparkling best as a writer of travel impressions. 'The Indians and Entertainment' and 'Dance of the Sprouting Corn', were his earliest essays written in that land. 'The Hood Snake Dance' was seen by him in Arizona. 'A little moonshine and the Lemon', describes the feast day of St. Catherine. The whole book is morbidly sombre, the atmosphere is dull and dusty, the earth is baked and pale; there are no flowers of Switzerland, and no scenes of Sardinia.

"Because when all is said and done Mexico has a faint physical scent of her own, as each human being has. And this is a curious inexplicable scent in which there are resin and perspiration, and sunburnt earth and urine among other things". 1

"At that moment a silence falls on the whole crowd of listeners. It is the famous darkness and silence of Egypt, the touch of the other mystery. The deep concentration of the priests conquers for a few seconds our white faced flippancy, and we hear only the deep Ha Ha Ha Ha speaking to snakes and the earth's inner core". 2

"Pale dry baked earth that blows into dust of fine sand. Low hills of baked pale earth sinking heavily and speckled sparsely with dark dots of cedar bushes. A river on the plain of drought just a cleft of dark reddish brown water almost a flood. And over all a blue uneasy alkaline sky". 3

Lawrence had no calm and no peace, his restless tortured soul took to the road with high hopes but he was chagrined in the end.

2. Ibid., p.133.
3. Ibid., p.105.
Stephen Leacock (1869 - 1944).

My Discovery of England - 1922.

Stephen Leacock and G. K. Chesterton represent the old tradition of the humorists - Mark Twain and Dickens, Hilaire Belloc and others. But things have changed within this time. Nobody is so thoroughly acquainted with life as Mark Twain; and none can be so hilariously serious and so deeply and romantically interested in nature as Hilaire Belloc. Humour is not the main thing in a book of travel; travel must come first; it is here that Leacock and Chesterton fail inspite of all their genial spirit, their farcical hits, and their paradoxical statements.

And in the next twenty years, humorous books of travel lose still more of the old charm. Thus it is mainly a study in decay and decline, factors responsible for it may be very many. Mr. Stephen Leacock must be given due importance as a teacher of Political Science at the McGill University in Montreal, and as a Practical politician who could have occupied a seat in any Conservative Cabinet, if he liked. Then come his humorous sketches like the _Sunshine_ Sketches dealing with the fictional town of Mariposa which is obviously his own town of Orillia, Ontario. All his writings display fully his generous and noble spirit, his love of U.S.A. and England, and his adopted homeland Canada; he laboured hard for their Unity.

My Discovery of England is an excellent piece of satire, a satire of travellers and travel books; he debunks the authors who write books only to make money.

"I find that I receive impressions with great difficulty and have nothing of that easy facility in picking them which is shown by British writers in America. I remember Hugh Walpole telling me that he could hardly walk down Broadway without getting at least three dollars worth, and on Fifth Avenue five
dollars worth and I recollected that St. John Irvine came up to
my house in Montreal, drank a cup of tea, borrowed some tobacco,
and got away with sixty dollars worth of impressions of Canadian
life and character. 1

There is a humour of peculiar type; gentle, captivating
sincere, generous, with some elements of American exaggeration.
There is not much subtlety or delicacy about it; it is of the
same stuff of which his jokes in the class-room used to consist;
it is the humour of a professor meant for large audiences, and
hence the themes with which he deals are the same - politics,
university education, and press. The House of Commons comes in
for a witty hit.

"Towards the close of the evening a member rose and asked
the Government if they knew what time it was. The Speaker however
ruled this question out of order on the ground that it had already
been answered before". 2

He laughs at the deterioration of standards in American
Universities by the introduction of some funny courses in some
stupid subjects.

"Strange though it seems to us on this side of the Atlantic
there are no courses at Oxford in House Keeping or Salesmanship
or in Advertising or on comparative Religion or on the influence
of the press. There are no lectures whatever on human behaviour
or Altruism or Egoism or the Play of Wild Animals. Apparently
the Oxford student does not learn these things". 3

Travel has nothing to give him in the way of impressions
of scenes and sights, men and women, he is constantly pre-occupied
with the feeling that he must create something humours. Even
the city of London awakes no memories.

"You read in the morning paper that the city is deeply
depressed. At noon it is reported that the city is very buoyant,
and by four o'clock that the city is widely excited ... But
these mysteries of the city I do not pretend to explain. I have
passed through the place dozens of times and never noticed any
thing particular in the way of depression or very buoyancy, or
falling oil or rising rails. But no doubt it is there". 4

1. My Discovery of England - London - 1922, p.33,
2. Ibid., p.54-
3. Ibid., p.78
4. Ibid., p.37, 39.
71. G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936).

1. Irish Impressions London - 1919.


K. Chesterton is too flippant an observer to be a good traveller, he looks only at things gone wrong; he is always in search of weak points which he may utilise for the practice of his witticism and the use of the paradox. The effect is not always positive, and the views are not clearly acceptable; he is like a man shouting menacing orders and proclaiming arbitrary judgements and jingling bells at the same time. He delights in turning up unexpected things; by his verbal tricks he gives the most novel effect to the most ordinary things. Thus it is the piquancy of expression which is more important than the worthiness of thought. His humour is saved by his common sense. His books of travel do not have a lasting value.

Irish Impressions - 1919.

The Irish Impressions is a book of social and economic problems, and not a true book of travel, he deals with the Irish Problems, the labour question, the role of Englishmen in Ireland, and other political blunders. He tries to be jovial in a book that is really very serious in subject and boring in style.

"My first general and usual impression of the green island was that it was not green but brown, that it was positively brown with Khaki".1

"That I suspect is the paradox of Ireland in the modern world. Everything that was thought progressive as a prancing horse, has come to a stand still. Everything that was thought decadent as a dying drunkard has risen from the dead. All that seemed to have reached a cul de sac has turned the corner, and stands at the opening of a new road". 2

1. Irish Impressions - London - 1919 p. 69.

2. Ibid., p. 11.
Chesterton will not give up his witticism even in the Holy City, that in a way reveals his true spirit towards religion, his treatment of Muslims and Turkish history is not based on broadminded considerations; he lacks the serious and profound emotions that are evoked by the mere sight of the ancient walls and towers, he just laughs at the green grass growing on the top of the buildings, that he says in the banner of Islam:

"We talk of the green banner of the Turk having been planted on this or that citadel, and certainly it was so planted with splendid valour, and sensational victory. But this is the green banner (grass) that he plants on all his high cities in the end". 1

Then he continues to praise the constancy of the monks who have continued to stay in the holy places for more than 1500 years, that he should realise is a compliment to the spirit of the Muslims. And then he laughs at the Greek priests who tie their hair behind like women. Only the pillars of Constantine give him a serious feeling of pride. This is flippancy gone too far, and humour misapplied; there are occasions for laughter and moments for tears and sighs; a traveller who laughs through out the voyage is blind to certain aspects of life which are important in their own way.

What I saw in America -1923.

Here again he is in the search of pleasant paradoxical statements which may give beauty to his style and delight to his readers, the huge hotels, press reporters, businessmen and prohibition, new cults, feminism, all come in for a hit or two. The book is no doubt written in a good temper, and he is not so cruel towards the Americans as Kipling and Dickens.

1. NEW JERUSALEM -London-1920, p.48 2.Ibid., p.81
"For the rest my last American tour consisted of inflicting no less than ninety lectures on people who never did me any harm, and the remainder of the adventure which was very enjoyable breaks up like a dream into isolated incidents. An aged negro porter with a face like a walnut, when I discouraged from brushing my hat rebuked me saying 'Ho, youngman, Yo's losing you dignity before yo times. Yo's got to look nice for de girls.'

The distinction which he makes between traveller and tripper is applicable to himself, he is certainly a tripper. G. K. Chesterton is too individualistic to change with the conditions and circumstances; the new lands do not affect the spiritual atmosphere, or the process of thought; he is everywhere the same Chesterton. He is constantly deriding modern life - even in the ancient land; he condemns logic, but in a perfectly logical manner; he has no faith in modern ways of life, but his views are most modern in spirit.

72. THEODORE DREISER '1871-1945.

1. The Colour of a Great City (1923).

Theodore Dreiser is a great realist, he concentrates upon a certain theme and lays bare all that counts in its spiritual life, its inner existence, and its outward appearance. He has deep human sympathy, sincerity, and love for the suffering homeless creatures. His style was never mature, within the same book he can rise to great heights or fall to dull reportorial method of the newspaper. A Traveller at Forty, is the result of a trip undertaken in 1913, and Hoosier Holiday describes a visit to his native state of Indiana. But as regards spirit and style, of sublimity of feelings and perfection...

2. Ibid. p. 311.
sublimity of feelings and perfection of method it is his 
*Colour of A Great City* which deserves a high place in the 
literature of travel; it is a fine specimen of what treatment 
a traveller and wanderer with literary skill can give to 
a single city. There is nothing like it except perhaps 
*London Nights*, by Stephen Graham. It is a picture of the 
city of New York as it was between 1900- and 1915. At 
that time the city was more varied and arresting, poetic and 
idealistic. He rambled in the most peculiar and strangest 
areas, wandered even in the meaner streets among Jews and 
Bohemians; he was among the veritable shoals of beggars and 
bums, idlers and crooks, These pages bear the stamp of the 
hour. 

First place must be given to the poetic style of the 
author, poetry that rises from the depth of a feelingful heart, 
and glows with the love of a lover looking at his dream 
maiden; and his deep affection is expressed in words, suitable 
for the city of Rome or Athens. He is a lover of life, life 
that is eternal, everlasting, mysterious; nations rise and 
fall, but the universe continues; and this city is only a 
symbol of this universe.

"People have come and gone, nations have risen and 
fallen, all sorts of puny stren ths have had their day and 
have perished, but this thing has never weakened nor modified 
itself nor changed atleast not very much. It is life so 
long and so strong". 1

"The beauty of life is involved very largely with the 
outline of its scenery. There are many other things which 
make up the joy of our world for us, but this is one of the 
most salient of its charms". 2

He is a man of romantic imagination, of dreams, of 
aspirations that nothing can lower, of flights which he enjoys 
with the birds.

2. Ibid. p. 170.
I do not know what it is that makes pigeons so interesting to me, unless it is that this flight of theirs into the upper world is to me the essence of things, poetic, the one thing that I should like to do myself. . . . If I were to have the privilege of re-incarnation I might even choose to be a pigeon. 1

By his magic touch he can give a beauty and charm to the common every day sights; they are garbed in the raiment of imagination, and they shine upon the eye of vision with a lustre that betokens a fairy land.

"It was silent, the city of my dreams, marble and barren, due perhaps to the fact that in reality I knew nothing of crowds, poverty and storms of the inadequate that blow like dust along the paths of life. It was an amazing city so far flung, so beautiful, so dead. There were tracks of iron stalking through the air, and streets that were as canons, and stair-ways that mounted in vast flights to noble plazas, and steps that led down into deep places where were strangely enough underworld silences. And there were parks and flowers and rivers. 2

He is a man with a feeling-ful heart, he feels both for men and for animals; the animals dying in the butcher house, the unhappy people committing suicide on the river side, and the infants left by mothers, the track walkers overrun by trains all evoke a pang of sorrow in his sensitive soul. This pathetic effect is created with great economy of words, concentration, and outward restraint only. Hemingway does better by still greater restraint, but it rises to a point where an unwary reader may completely miss the idea. He moves the reader by rendering pictures of the horror with a few words, by comparing it with the joys of life, and by referring to the Universal problems of life and death, joy and sorrow. His language and his balanced sentences in a way ward off the effect of crude horror, just as poetry in Shakespeare's plays somewhat softens the effect of brutal murder and bloodshed.

2. Ibid., p. 1.
"They have accomplished their journey, the island its tragedy. They have come down to the rivers of the nameless dead. They have yielded themselves as a sacrifice to the variety of life. They have proved the uncharitableness of the island of beauty." 1

"But it has significance. These dumb creatures we see thus automatically and hopelessly trundling down a rail of death are really not so far removed from us in the scale of existence. You will find them but a little way down the ladder of mind, climbing slowly and patiently towards those heights which we think we have permanently attained. There is a terror of death for them as far as you and you will see it here exemplified, the horror that makes them run cold with the knowledge of their situation." 2

"For sixty years winter and summer in the bitterest cold and the most stifling heat, it has seen them come, the poor and the rich, the humble, the proud, the beautiful the homely, and one by one, they have laid their children and brooded over them, wandering if it were possible for human love to make so great a sacrifice, and yet not die." 3

It is an inimitable picture of the city as it was sixty years back, a painting with dimensions, with many colours, he is alive to all effects of life; humour and jokes of the bums and tramps are also recorded with real gusto; it is the humour of the broad minded sufferer, who rises above the personal circumstances, and looks at life like a philosopher.

"Whenever I think of them I think of the spectacle that that genius of the burlesque world of my day, Nat Wills, used to present when in fluttering rags and tatters, his vestless shirts open at the breast, revealing no under-wear, his shoes three times too big, and torn and cracked, a small battered straw hat ...... he was won't to strike an attitude worthy of a flight of oratory and exclaim, "Fifteen years ago today I was a poor dis-spirited borkert dowtramp, sitting on a bench in a path, not a efceaMs shirt to my back not a decent pair of shoes on my feet. A hat with a hole in it .......... Yet look at me now." 4

It is a lovely book, with the true flavour and colour of the old city, it is a lady of many moods, this city, his old love; he uses words with such fitness that no other would replace them, he frames every sentence with charming...

2. Ibid., p.134.
3. Ibid., p.242.
4. Ibid., p.34.
care, and every sentence with cumulative effect rising higher and higher like the rope trick; when he begins there is nothing but a simple bench or a lonely man but by the time the sketch is completed, he has infused into it all the energies of life, and all the shadows of death, all the cries of the poor and all the rays of the sun.

73. Walter Starkie - (1894 - ) Ragle - Tagle - 1933.

From the city of New York to the gypsies of central Europe is a contrast rich in many implications, and cultural and social significance; here is a comparison of two extreme ends of life - the vagabond and the highly civilised city dweller - the closed narrow limits of sky scrapers and the vast open plains and blue skies over-head. It is a compliment to the richness of English genius; they study and take interest in every phase of life, they alone are true lovers of life, 'following knowledge like a sinking star beyond the utmost bound of human thought'. It is significant that the old wandering spirit of George Borrow is not yet dead inspite of what the modern artists in select circles may say. In recent times W. H. Davies and Stephen Graham alone have followed this road to the wilderness within the heart of Europe and U.S.A. This wanderer is an eminent professor of Spanish in the University of Dublin.

Apart from the abundant treasure of material collected from first-hand experience on the spot, and its usefulness for any student of gypsy life, the book must be acknowledged as a great literary masterpiece. It is as charming as any book by Borrow though there is no room for old adventures today; it has the beauty of description and narration. The scenes of nature of plains and lakes, of nights and...
moonlight, and simple habitations of the sons of the earth—delight the reader with vividness, clarity, and calmness; his pictures though simple have a haunting beauty about them. Fiery and fierce characters, women with hypnotising eyes live and breathe within these pages; his characters carry about them the wilderness of the camp, dirt and smell of the body, and demoniac fierceness of passions. It is a double journey—journey through the camps and settlements of the gypsies and journey through the world of the poets, the land of imagination.

The beauty of the gypsy girls, with all its angelic and evil aspects—finds a prominent place in this account of travel; he acknowledges the power of their beauty but he does not over-look their immorality and wickedness, he combines romanticism with realism.

"Following my friends' instructions, I dragged my feet and sure enough a dark-eyed girl smiled at me, and when I followed her, she stopped and spoke to me. She was a pretty little thing with a pale face, and eyes that pierced right through me." 1

"A small faced girl, her hair coal black, her head small and delicately shaped as though it had been modelled by an artist, her nose small and slightly aquiline; her forehead so full and open that it gave virile and Valkyrie quality to her face, her eyes so thick that they seemed to form an uninterrupted straight line across her face. Her whole person was in proportion but inclined to slenderness . . . . . . Everything else faded into insignificance when we came to her eyes . . . . . . her eyes hypnotised you." 2

"Man is a simple animal, he loves to imagine the charm of lurid vices, and his fantasy dwells on dangerous types. But bring him up near one of those shimmering fatal beauties, and he immediately longs for his calm fireside, and his red carpet slippers. As the Circo spoke to me—the thrill of magic casements opening on faery lands forlorn burnt within me, but I kept repeating to myself, 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci.'"3

2. Ibid., p.50.
3. Ibid., p.70.
There are charming girls living a disgraceful life in hotels; there is Anna who takes him to her room and starts dancing naked, and there are parents having sexual relations with their children. The men that move through these pages are singers, violin-players, murder, and a thoroughly bad lot. He believes that even Borrow must have been looted by them.

Nature gets the most beautiful treatment; but for these scenes of nature which spread freshness and fragrance everywhere—The gypsy would certainly smell of sweat, garlic, and unclean living. Nature is its saving grace, in fact its raison d'être, a poet as he is, he sings not of gypsy beauties but of morning and evening, of sunlight and moon-lit night; the folk tales and stories of the gypsies would lose much of their flavour without this background of nature.

"That evening at six o'clock I set out to visit the gypsies. At that hour the sun was sinking, and all the country around Cluj was bathed in crimson light which made the houses look like fairy palaces of the Arabian Nights. Outside the city in the calm of the evening there was a hush as though nature was gazing in awe at the majestic death of the sun. The sky with its red clouds resembled a blazing Valhalla, and even the birds, that shortly before were singing merrily now hushed their voices as the grey shadow of dusk stole over the scene."

"It was now dark and I determined to spend the night in the open, for the air was balmy and the moon made the country look like fairy land. In the day time the meadows looked parched, the roads were dusty, and the heat was exhausting, but at night on the Hungarian plain there was a delightful and cool breeze and everything in nature seemed to awaken to life. The moon-light shining through the trees carved everything into queer fantastic shapes."

This vagabond life among the gypsies is a great achievement but the book which he has written is an achievement still greater. Songs and dances of these swarthy homeless people of India in the romantic cities of Bucharest, Cluj, Budapest and in Transylvania are made to evoke the golden age of the gypsies, and the whole book gives the impression of the

1. Raggle Taggle - London - 1930, p.19
2. Ibid., p. 26
3. Ibid., p.33
4. Ibid., p.241
5. Ibid., p. 34
a beautiful lovely illusion we call life.

"Hungarians are never weary of talking about their Fata Morgana, and it becomes in their minds a kind of symbol of the illusions of life. Here in this immense solitude where everything is majestic and poetic in its harmony nothing prevents me from dreaming. There is serenity and tranquillity everywhere, at times the silence becomes terrifying in its intensity but then I hear the distant tinkle of the bell of some grazing animal, or when dusk begins to fall like a cloud of thin sand dropped in our eyes by the fairy sand man I hear far away the sound of a shepherd's flute." 1

It is a lovely book, a charming record of a life that is already ended, an excellent piece of sober calm and lucid prose.


If Haggle Taggle is a picture of the vast open places of Hungary and Roumania, peopled by the gypsies, the Kings of nature, as Cervantes called them, with no history and no political problems, The Black Lamb and Grey Falcon is as it were the other half of life - the life of city dwellers men of culture and literature, men with a snobbish sense of superiority dwelling in almost the same corner of the globe. It is a comparison of simplicity and complexity of natural happiness and beauty with the uncertainty of modern life in the very seats of ancient Kings and heroes. Rebecca West too is a poetess at heart; she looks into the very soul of cities and peoples, places and communities, and she writes about them with warmth and lyricism. History, legends and myths, character

sketches, scenes and sights, and vicarious pieces of philosophy give it a richness and charm, and make it one of the finest travel accounts of the Pre-War days. It is a book inspired by the political situation; the rise of Hitler's Nazis and the assassination of the King of Yugoslavia in 1934 made all sensible people feel that the Second Great War was near. Black Lamb is the symbol of blood sacrifice, and the grey bird is a falcon, a symbol of war.

"Again the grey falcon had flown from Jerusalem and it was to be with the English as it was with the Christian Slavs, the nation was to have its throat cut as if it were a black lamb in the arms of a pagan priest." 1

But before the shadows of war fell over the Western World there was room enough to wander in the land of one's choice, and look at the reality of life, thus there is not much gloom of war in the main body of the book. What raises the book to a high level is her poetic treatment of every day themes, her insight into the character of persons and places, her philosophic altitude, her naive way of introducing side issues and irrelevances; her digressions and references to daily dinner and lunch; all these make it a human document. Her prose has clarity, simplicity, dignity, and a deep poetic quality.

The pictorial quality of her style leaves a vivid impression on the mind of the reader; it is a queer way of saying a new thing that stands blazing a trail through the wilderness of thought. They talk of Henri Bergson in that distant place Zagreb; she remarks. 2

"A line of light ran along the dark map of Europe we all of us hold in our minds; at one end a Serbian town, unknown to me, as Ur peopled with the personnel of fairy tales and at the other end the familiar idea of Bergson." 2

2. Ibid., p.42,
There was nobody about when we arrived but one of the more mystical monks, an old-man like a long white painted flame, to whom we were nothing, who was probably not sure whether we were among the living or the dead."

The fresco at Neresi showing infant Christ being washed by the Madonna reminds her of Blake.

"It is all in the fresco at Neresi. The fingers number every nerve of the infant Christ just as a miser counts his gold, that is spoken of by the tense tough muscles of her arms, the compulsive fingers, terrible, seen, through the waters of bath as marine tentacles. She is catching his shrieks in cups of gold; that is to say she is looking down with awe on what she is so freely handling. She is binding iron around his head, she is piercing both his hands and feet, she is cutting his heart out at his side - because she is naming him in her mind the Christ to whom these things are to happen."2

These pictorial powers are an asset for a writer of travel books; the cities cannot be made to live in the mind by details of towers and tombs, Cathedrals and canals, just a description of some choice points showing the very spirit and total impression of a place does the trick. She possesses this skill better than any other writer.

"Sometimes a country will for days keep its secrets from a traveller, showing him nothing but its surfaces, its grass, its trees, the outside of its houses. Then suddenly it will throw him a key and tell him to go where he likes, and see what he can. "3

Character sketches of real persons who participate in the events of the story are also etched most skilfully in a few words, often ironical, but most suitable for conveying the proper impression.

"Constantine is short and fat, with a head like the best known Satyr in Louvre, and an air of vine leaves, about the brow. Though he drinks little, he is perpetually drunk on what comes out of his mouth, not what goes into it. He talks incessantly. In the morning he comes out of his bed in the middle of a sentence, and at night he goes back into it, so that he may just finish one sentence more." 4

Even a crowd is described in a few words by giving a beautiful picture of men and women singing before the church. By a thousand charming touches she makes it ....... .......

2. Ibid., p.690.  3. Ibid., p.786.  4. Ibid., p.39.
friendly poetic book; it is a monumental work, but the interest flags nowhere. There is a natural spontaneous grace, she seems to have rejuvenated the prose of journalism, she has a fine sense of word values, and a perception of their expressive force. They have appropriateness, freshness, and force of suggestion.

Don Fernando- (1935).

Don Fernando can only by courtesy be called a travel book, since, though it would never have been written but for my long sojourns in Spain, it deals for the most part not with the cities the traveller may visit nor with the famous sights that demand his attention and extort his wonder, but with excursions into Spain's Golden Age. So great is the fascination of that country that it is not a gross exaggeration to say that any one who has been there any length of time, and can wield a pen or pound e a typewriter has found himself impelled to write a book about it. 1

It is an unusual book of travel, unusual in two ways, it is different from the other books of travel which Somerset Maugham has written, and it is different from the works of the travellers who have studied Spanish life, and have journeyed through the land. In his On a Chinese Screen, he observes the different and varied aspects of life; men and women, normal and abnormal, with absurd contradictions of character and with many human failings crowd the pages of that book. The Gentleman in the Parlour is a more elaborate affair, but the spirit is the same; in India, South Seas and other lands he has looked at life in an objective manner, with detachment and with a sense of superiority, life and death, sorrow and joy, pain and pleasure seem to be the main motive forces, moving and activating mankind in all these lands. But in Spain he himself is captivated, he is no more the superior philosophic, and indifferent visitor and hence

and hence the difference of style as well as the spirit of the book. This in a way illustrates how books of travel lose or gain in one way or the other because of the simple fact of spiritual affinity of the writer for that land. But in a way there is no better way of depicting the spirit of Spain without a brief study of St. Ignatius Loyala, St. Teresa, Cervantes, Lope Da Vega, El Greco and others one would never be able to understand the spirit of Spain, and it is thus that it is an excellent book of travel. Don Fernando is the tavern keeper in Seville who compels him to purchase curios at a very high price, and gives him free an old book on the life of St. Ignatius Loyala.

In spite of all these things it is deeply marked by his personality, it is a book of strong likes and dislikes, clear and definite views based on long study and full acquaintance; it is a book of personal preferences, and Maugham reveals himself while revealing the spirit of Spain. With his sharp examining eye, his unflinching sincerity and his essentially critical outlook— he gives a touch of authority and authenticity to what he says. He has direct and strong sense of inner life, and a penetrating sympathy which lays bare to his gaze the secrets of other souls and other ages, always there is a consciousness of self which is intensified by a vivid faculty of imagination and feeling. He should be ranked as a critic of life— and in this role he shows insight and virility, and spiritual depths of experience. He closely grasps the contours and characteristics of every philosophic literary, and artistic movement, and when dealing with great personages like Cervantes he reveals the
truth and whole truth, he fully delineates both the moral and physical individuality of temperament.

"No body can travel through the various paths of the Spanish scene, in the sixteenth century without getting a frequent glimpse of that mysticism that seems to dwell only just below the threshold of consciousness in so many of these passionate men who, you would have thought men completely immersed in the turmoil of the world. In Spain you are seldom out of the sight of the mountains. They rise before you gaunt, and austere, blue on the far horizon, they seem to summon you to a new magic world. The Sierra Nevada, with its mantel of snow is remote and formidable, but in the dawn or at sunset, shines, with a coloured beauty not of this earth. And so mysticism never very far away, obtrusive but insistent with its strange attraction that all the human in you resists, seems to haunt the shadows that darken the brilliant prospect. It is like a troubling, tragic, and lovely theme that runs through a florid symphony". 1

The life of the people is at the same level as as their thought, they live life as beautifully as others only imagine it.

"In Spain it is the men that are the poems, the pictures, and the buildings. Men are its philosophies. They lived these Spaniards of the Golden Age; they felt and did, they did not think, life was what they sought and found. Life its turmoil, its fervour, and its variety". 2

This profound and philosophic information is made deeply interesting and charming, by the personal touches he gives here and there, the foods and dishes he prefers, the hotels where he resides, the cities which he likes come in between these longer descriptions of the poets and mystics. Here speaks from personal experience.

For a reason that I have never been able to discover you eat much better in the north of a country than in the south. The English cherish the ingenuous notion that you can eat well anywhere in France. It is not true....... And in Andalusia you eat romantically rather than to the satisfaction of your palate". 3

His first travel book about Spain 'The Land of the Blessed Virgin' or 'Andalusia' was published in 1905, but it is not a very comprehensive or very interesting account, he wrote it when he was only twenty three years old.

2. Ibid., p. 146.
3. Ibid., p. 41.
**Death in the After-Moon - 1932.**

"Veteran out of the Wars before he was twenty
Famous at twenty five, thirty a master
Whittled a style for his time from a Walnut stick
In a carpenter's loft in a street of that April City."

(Archibald MacLeish).

Ernest Hemingway passed through the fire, he was tested and proved of stirring value; the continent was the place where he got his education. There besides art and literature he qualified in many other modern courses like languages, people, politics, warfare, and peace conferences. But war came first, and before he was nineteen in Italy he was wounded so badly with an Austrian machine-gun and trench mortar that he limped home after a year, and seemed to have brought full knowledge of war to the town of Oak Park near Chicago. Like Orwell he deliberately lived in the midst of the conditions about which he wanted to write and this continued till the end, in the Second Great War he had hired a home on the German front, and entertained the N.I.E. who entered his home without knowing who he was. The time when he returned to Chicago was a time of a new beginning in literature.

"It was the time of a Renaissance in the arts, in literature a 'Robbin's Egg Renaissance'... it had perhaps -- pale blue tinga. It fell out of the nest. It may be that we should all have stayed in Chicago." 1

But they did not stay there, the continent was calling him. After the land of his birth and boyhood Italy was Hemingway's first love, and France his second, but of all the nations of Europe Spain stood out most strongly in his affection. His journalistic work came in handy, and took him to Paris.

"Paris was the place to be discovered 'O Paris, O Fontparnasse'" 2

1. The Memoirs of Sherwood Anderson - New York - 1942, p.199
2. The Autobiography by Alice... Toklas, New York - 1938 - p.240
He was willing to risk everything; he was not afraid of being distracted by different lands and problems.

"In going where you have to go and doing what you have to do, and seeing what you have to see, you dull and blunt the instrument you write with. But I would rather have it bent and know I had to put it on the grind-stone again, and hammer it into shape, and put a whet-stone to it, and know that I had something to write about than to have it bright and shining and nothing to say, or smooth and well-oiled in the closet, but unused". 1

As far back as 1925, he was planning to write a book on bull fighting; he told his new friend Fitzgerald that his idea of heaven would be a big bull ring in which he owned two barrera seats, with a trout stream outside that no one else was allowed to fish. 2 And he wrote to Maxwell Perkins April 1925 that he hoped to write a sort of Doughty's Arabia Deserta of the bull ring. 3 Death in the Afternoon was completed in January 1932, and came out in September, the same year. It marks the end of period in his literary career which extends from 1922 to 1932, it marks the stage when he cared more for life than style; the new age is the harbinger of the beauty of form and the love of man.

Death in the Afternoon.

It is strictly speaking a study of bull-fighting in Spain, but it has involved travels into that land, and it gives the spirit of Spain much better than any other academic travel book. In the beginning he gives a fine critical study of this sport, and then follow accounts of bull-fights in the different towns with photographs of the great masters in action, and even on death bed.


3. Ibid., p.145.
of life but a study of death, a subject

.1 to him and which he describes with primitive

is to something deep within him, the instinct

hum against the dark shadow of the end.

"I was arning to write commencing with the simplest thing

and one of the simplest things of all and most fundamental is a

violent death. It has none of the complications of death by
disease or so called natural death or the death of a friend or
some one, you have loved or have hated, but it is death never­
theless one of the subjects that a man may write of." I

Death of the bull never gave him a feeling of horror,

he felt fine after seeing it, though he confesses that it is

not real sport.

"The bull fight is not a sport in the Anglo Saxon sense

of the word, that is it is not an equal contest or an attempt
at an equal contest between a bull and a man. Rather it is a
tragedy; the death of the bull, which is played more or less
well by the bull and the man involved, and in which there is no
danger for the man but certain death for the animal." 2

"But the book is partly infected by a queer kind of maudlin
emotion, which sounds atonce neurotic and drunken. He over­
does his glorification of the bravery and martyrdom of the bull
fighter." 3

This is not a very clear opinion, there is no maudlin emotion,

and there is no glorification of martyrs; Hemingway is perfectly

trustworthy on the atmosphere of that time. The cities and towns
get their due; the raw ugliness of Bilbao, the tawdry cheapness
of Santander, the green oasis of Aranjuez all are properly treated.
The sense of place is strong in the book.

"Madrid is a mountain city with a mountain climate. It
has the high cloudless Spanish sky, and it makes Italian sky
see sentimental, and it has air that is actively pleasurable
to breathe. The heat and cold come and go quickly there, I

1. Death in the Afternoon - London - 1955 p.10
2. Ibid. p.22
have watched on a July night when I could not sleep the beggars burning newspapers in the street to keep warm. Two nights later it was too hot to sleep until the coolness that comes just before morning." 1

It is honest realistic style, there is nothing trugid and intentionally obscure. There is no rhetoric and no lyricism; it is essentially a down to Spanish-earthiness affair. The problem of death is the centre of the story, and a man of action like the bull fighters represents his idea of a hero, he has no room for abstract philosophic ideas. He has a penetrating quality "like an animal speaking". 2 Death in the Afternoon is a source book for 'For Whom the Bell Tolls, the same material is given a great dramatic intensity. 3

77. GEORGE ORWELL (1903 - 1950).


Eric Arthur Blair (pen-name George Orwell) was born in India in 1903, and served in the Burma Police for a number of years during which he saw the defects of the Imperial system, he resigned his job and went to live a free-man, though an extremely poor-man in Paris and London. Shooting an Elephant and other Essays (1950) is based on his experiences in Burma and India. He passed some days in London and Paris working as a waiter in a hotel. Down and Out in Paris and London (1933), and Road to Wigan Pier, describe his experiences of those lean years. George Orwell is thoroughly honest and sincerer, his realism is based on actual experiences, he deliberately lives the life about which he wants to write.

2. Wystham Lewis - Men Without Art - London - 1934 - p.17
3. For Whom the Bell Tolls - Bombay - 1944 - p.40.
his uncompromising honesty makes him a spirit akin to E.M. Forster, but he has journeyed a long way round to arrive at this ideal of personal goodness. He was a leftist, but was soon disillusioned, and he never concealed his terrible bitterness. The Animal Farm and "1984", bear witness to this bitterness of the heart. Homage to Catalonia (1938) is an account of his journey to Spain during the Civil War, he took part in it as a volunteer.

Homage to Catalonia (1938).

Orwell uses simple prose with a highly dignified effect, step by step clearly and simply, he raises a great edifice, nothing he writes is either exaggerated or over stated. It is a true picture of Spain as he saw it; unlike Maugham he is not interested in the past, he has nothing to say about poets, artists, and mystics; he will not describe the wild passions of men, nor the beauty of gypsy women; and it is characteristic that there is not a single reference to bull fighting. He is not concerned with the soul of Spain, he wants to paint the surface, and he does it perfectly. He has no regard for any dogmatic slogans, truth, and the whole truth must be told, and it is this uncompromising spirit of honesty which distinguishes him from all other writers. Dirt, lice and unclean conditions on the front, are fully described, this is the life which is left out of all heroic accounts of war.

"The position stank abominably, and outside the little enclosure of the barricade there was excrement everywhere. Some of the militia men habitually defecated in the trench, a disgusting thing when one had to walk round in darkness. But the dirt never worried me. Dirt is a thing people make too much fuss about". 1

"I have had a big experience of body vermin of various kinds and for sheer beastliness the louse beats everything. I have encountered other insects, mosquitoes for instance make you suffer more but at least they are not resident vermin. The human louse somewhat resembles a tiny lobster, and he lives chiefly in your trousers. In war all soldiers are lousy at least when it is warm enough. The men who fought at Verdun, at Waterloo at Flodden, at Thermopylae every one of them had lice crawling over his testicles." 1

He compares the dirt of man with the beauty and abundance of Nature and he draws no high moral and philosophic results, he only casually points out the beauties round, he neither accuses men nor praises Nature.

"The days grew hotter and the nights grew tolerably warm. On a bullet chipped tree in front of our parapet thick clusters of cherries were forming. Bathing in the river ceased to be an agony, and became almost a pleasure, wild roses with pink blossoms the size of saucers straggled over the shell holes round Torre Fabian. Behind the line you met peasants wearing wild roses over their ears." 2

Clarity, cruel clarity, naked clarity, in describing scenes and men is a power that he wields with great facility, it is a vigorous mind behind it that works with perfect ease. His language is concrete like his thought, but his handling of certain devices shows that this simplicity is a highly cultivated affair, and he takes pleasure in what he puts so simply and smartly, he is wise enough not to spoil it by attempting effects of any other kind, and that is responsible for the robustness of his style and the charm of candid self revelation.

The Spanish character is shown in two dimensions - as decent, generous, chivalrous men, and as hopeless straggling militia men and confused politicians; one phase is permanent and the other is temporary.

He was tough looking youth of twenty-five or six, with reddish yellow hair, and powerful shoulders. His peaked leather cap was pulled fiercely over one eye. He was standing in profile to me, his chin in his breast, gazing with a...

2. Ibid. p.108
puzzled frown at a map with which one of the Officers had open at the table. Something in his face deeply moved me. It was the face of a man who would commit murder and throw away his life for a friend — the kind of face you would expect in an anarchist."

Orwell has given a rare image and most vividly clear of that ancient land of soldiers and saints; it is the finest, simplest, and yet robust and vigorous prose of inimitable beauty.

J. B. Priestley - (1894 - ).


J. B. Priestley inspite of the fine titles of his books never journeys up the rainbow or down the rainbow, he never aspired to follow knowledge like a sinking star, he never went to sea, and never got ship-wrecked on an island; he is not the sailor sailing over the distant horizons in pursuit of the white whale, and he is not a hunter returning from the hills. He was never sad enough to seek happiness in an escape like D. H. Lawrence.

"Only gods succeed in walking on the rainbow bridge, mortals fall to their death, for the rainbow is only a beautiful resemblance that stretches across the heavens, and not a road for corporeal human-beings, they must go through underneath." 2

J. B. Priestley is a modern of moderns, he has no interest in far off Shangrilas, and he has no interest in the gentle savage. Even history does not impress him; he lives and breathes in the present, and writes strictly about the subjects around him. He refuses to look at life through the eyes of imperialism of Kipling, or the snobbish intellectualism of Huxley. He has no taste for fun and mirth like Hilaire Belloc.

and he will not watch for the absurdities and contradictions of human character like Maugham. J. B. Priestley is a leisurely writer, weaving out fine chatty things out of his simple travels, there is no burden of thought, and no artificiality of style. Life as it flows along is caught and converted into a fine narrative, and this in itself is a great achievement. But he is a formidable critic of social and economic life, and with simple words he gives hammer-like blows. At the same time he enjoys the scenes of nature and all the good things of life with a great gusto, he will not deny the comforts of civilised life and will not reject machinery and science. J. B. Priestley has made a great contribution to the development of modern prose, his prose is completely free from ornamentation, but it is full of an inner harmony and sweetness which can only come from a pen that has attained maturity, there are no oratorical cadences, and there is no abundant wealth of words. His irony and satire are often bitter and biting, but he is always sincere in his criticism.

ENGLISH JOURNEY - 1934.

It is not a journey but a series of trips to different places, it is not a pleasure tour but a journey with a purpose, he looks at life with an unusual carefulness and he makes minute observations of low life. England which is so beautiful and romantic with associations of history, and which Hudson, Belloch, Massingham, Morton and others portray so charmingly, is for him a real living land full of unhappy men and women, and dirty towns and cities. His realism is balanced, and never exaggerated; what was condemned by readers of 1934 was soberly accepted in the after-war years.
We went through Bolton, between Manchester and Bolton; the ugliness is so complete that it is almost exhilarating: it challenges you live there. There is probably the secret of Lancashire folk; they have accepted that challenge, they are on active service, and so like front line troops they make a lot of little jokes and sing comic songs. There used to be a grim Lancashire adage, "where there is muck, there is money: but now when there is not much money, there is still a lot of muck." 1

Reunion with his old battalion brought him a sad feeling of the empty splendour of the military heroism, the men who died and the survivors who live in rags spoil his enjoyment of the Reunion day.

"We could drink to the tragedy of the dead; but we could only stare at one another, in pitiful embarrassment, over this tragic-comedy of the living, who had fought for a world that did not care for them, who had fought come back to exchange uniforms for rags. And who shall restore to them the years that the locust hath eaten." 2

There are interesting characters; real men from life of today who talk like Micawber, or like the hardened cynics in modern fiction. There is the man who has tried many ventures and failed; he has many plans in mind, to sell wireless to do hair-dressing, to open a tea-shop; he wants to sell gramophones, tobacco, and pipes, and he wonders if South Africa can prove any good.

"It is a matter of finding the right opening, that is all." 3

There is the philosophic mat mender whom he meets and who talks about his illegitimate children. The cities and towns with their historical association appeal to his mind, but he is never lost in the exact facts and figures of history, it is the dimness and vagueness of these details which enhances the charm of these places.

"I do not care where the battle was fought or the queen slept, nor out of what window the post looked; but a landscape rich in these vague associations - some of them without a name - gives me a deep pleasure and I could cry out at the lovely thickness of life, as different now from ordinary existence than.

2. Ibid., pp.172-73
3. Ibid., p.10
as plum pudding is from porridge." 1

But what gives charm to the book are the light cheerful touches and humorous remarks which he makes as he goes along, there is always originality and freshness in these remarks and funny anecdotes.

"The house once occupied in Norwich by the delightful Sir Thomas has been marked by a tablet, to the confusion of a certain well-known directory which in its 1929 Edition .... included Sir Thomas Browne among the medical practitioners of Norwich. (There is a good short story to be written about some innocent who sent for him, not in vain)." 2.

His style has simplicity, well-bred moderation, lucidity, and candidness, this subdued eloquence may appear too cold to some people, but sincerity, originality, and freshness give it a special lustre and charm.

ALMIGHT ON THE DESERT. - 1937.

In the Desert of Arizona he feels freer, and has no need to be as cautious as in England, he speaks boldly and he feels strongly; the book has a better style, greater power, and a finer flow. He feels carried away by the beauty of the midnight in that lonely ranch in Arizona, he has no kindness for New York or Hollywood, American women and co-eds too get a hit or two. But there is no distinct change so far as the form is concerned; all incongruous things find a place in the book, his principles remain as they were; but he displays boldness and sureness and he does not care for rules and traditions, he is innovating without knowing it; it has vigour, but it tries to keep practically along the same lines as his English journey. Love of Nature is so deep in the Anglo Saxon Character that all modern knowledge cannot outweigh it.

2. Ibid. p.386.
And the nights are even more spacious than the day. No lid of darkness is clapped over you. The spaces are wider than ever, and are lit night after night with all the stars of northern hemisphere as precisely defined as the stars in a planetarium. To return to England is to feel like a man who is let down into a cellar after sunset. If Shakespeare had ever seen such nights of stars he would have gone mad, trying to improve upon his "Look, how the floor of heaven is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold." 1

"The new world seemed to me the oldest country I had ever seen, the real antique land, first cousin to the moon; brown, bony, sapless, like an old man's hand. He called it new because it was not thick with history, not a museum city and guide book place. Man had been here such a little time that his arrival has not yet been acknowledged. He was still some season's trifling accident, like a sudden abundance of coyotes or cotton tails. The giant saguaro cactus, standing like a sentinel on every knoll, was not on the lookout for us, had not heard of us yet, still waited for trampling giant dinosaurs." 2

New York and Hollywood are for him just empty places, with no deep values and no special significance, but another-man like Dreiser would find it a fairy city, this is because Priestley is a modern traveller going in a speedy car or an aeroplane, though he condemns this sort of looking at life, but that is exactly what he himself does.

"This I conclude was the strangest corner of the earth I had ever known. It has the sea, and the mountains and never failing sunshine and yet so little charm .......... Everybody here is bronzed and fit, and nobody seems quite healthy. The climate suggests that it is the best in the world to work in, yet somehow one can do twice as much work almost anywhere else. There is no more cosmopolitan place than this, and yet it still seems an American small town suffering from elephantiasis." 3

J. B. Priestley is a wise and balanced critic of life and manners, he keeps reason and emotion in their proper places, and has nothing but contempt for the immoral ways of the American University students, the artificiality of American women, and the restless ways of American children. This love of reason and balance, serenity and sobriety of life makes

2. Ibid., p.2.
3. Ibid., p.192.
him condemn D.H. Lawrence in the severest terms; for him all sexual mysticism is just humbug.

"Here is a man in the midst of an applauding circle of intellectuals thundering against the intellect. It will not do. It is a manifest absurdity to write books in praise of illiteracy. To use the machinery of industrial revolution, as a writer must do, in order to proclaim the uselessness of the machinery of industrial civilisation - this is cheating."

The book has the fiction of unity - he begins by tearing some chapters of a book he has written. Midnight in the Desert is the hour for such a deed, and he ends with the same. The rest of it is only a reverie. Priestley has successfully acquired a pure and unadorned style. He aims at a simple sobriety of expression, and the moving appeal of every day ideas and emotions. His modest and realistic views look naive, but his precision is not prosaic. His prose has great suppleness, and does bear the stamp of art. It has a nervous strength which is extra-ordinary compared with its outward simplicity.

RAIN UPON GOD'S HILL (1939).

He finds himself on the Isle of Wight in chilly weather, and recounts pleasures of smoking - tobacco; it has the mood of Hazlitt, the spirit of Stevenson, and the method of his own. That in a way depicts the spirit of the whole book - a cheerful jolly talk about the joys of life; the subjects he treats are various, and the opinions he gives are gay, gentle, lucid, and convincing, it is a thought provoking book in spite of its casual tone. In a way it is like Somerset Maugham's Writers' Note Book and Summing up rolled 4s into one. Science and art, native Red Indians and beauties of nature, problems of University education, in U.S.A. the different types of guests and parties, the lecture agents, the ugliness of . . .

American cities, death and separation, the pyramids, and flying as a way of travelling are some of the subjects that he deals within a gentle yet vigorous way; only Dr. Johnson could have talked that way if he had lived in our own days. He shows greater regard for sentiment and soft simple romantic craving for beauties of nature. The idea of death moves him deeply.

"As Lamb pointed out in a famous passage, our own lives shrink with these succeeding deaths. As we huddle together after each funeral we close our ranks, hiding the gaps, but the little company of friends begins to dwindle miserably." 1

Without losing his rock-based realism, and his shattering originality - he in this book somehow comes nearest to Stevenson and other selected tramps of blessed memory; he breathes the same spirit, and somehow his utterances resemble those of others.

"When I am travelling in order to describe what I see as for example, when I was writing the English Journey - I always prefer to be alone, for it is my experience that one notices more, and is really more sensitive to the look and sound and flavour of things when solitary than when one is with company. After a few days of this lonely travelling there descends upon me, a mood of boredom, mixed with melancholy rather like that of Jacques, in the Forest of Arden, and out of this has come some of my best work." 2

"Without science we are helpless children, without poetry and deep natural piety, we are blundering fools, reeling in our new and terrible cock-sureness into one disaster after another. That is what I learnt beneath Rainbow Bridge." 3

He has no respect for the American Universities, and still less respect for the men who organise lectures on profit basis. 4 He is not moved by the huge size of the pyramids in Egypt, 5 and he believes that air travelling will have a bad effect on our attitude towards other human beings. 6

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2. Ibid., p.171.
3. Ibid., p.156.
4. Ibid., p. 155.
5. Ibid., p. 13.
6. Ibid., p. 8.
The book should mark the height of his narrative powers; there is simplicity combined with dignity, there is chattiness with real profundity of thought. The narrative never becomes monotonous. His style has attained the highest suppleness and at later stages it loses that proper balance of thought and feelings. With the passing of years becomes more bitter and satirical, and seems to be seeking the right or wrong reason to whip anybody that comes along. Rain Upon God's Hill should be considered a landmark, rather a tide mark, the tide ebbs, but the roaring gets louder.

JOURNEY DOWN A RAINBOW - In Collaboration with Jackquetta Hawkes - 1955.

This his last formal journey shows Priestley looking at life which is completely changed. It is the American rush and speed, head-long pushing, and mad spirit of adventure, and experiment that has made this change. It is not within the scope of this study to examine the new reckless spirit of this age and causes and factors which have led to it. Now America is invading the world, and it is now more a subject of study for a writer of travel books; thus Priestley is alive to the faintest change in the sphere of present day life; he marks all the winds that blow, and hears all the whispering in the air around him.

"The proper time for such books (travel books about U.S.A.) has gone. We are already in another age when America mostly pays the piper and calls for most of the tunes. There is no longer any point in leaving Leicester Square and Coventry street in order to describe Broadway which marvel has more electric light, newer Hollywood films, larger cafeterias. English readers have not to be conducted across the Atlantic to observe American style of urban life, it can be discovered in the nearest town. It is now the greatest invader." 1

Priestley is a reliable chronicler of our times; he understands this age - both the surface and soul are laid bare for our sight, but he does it with great facility, with perfect ease, and in a jolly spirit. It appears that age sharpens his vision, and his zest for good living makes him a bitter critic of the deteriorating values of life. His judgment is always sound; the main features of the age stand out in full relief. American women, American Universities and American rush and life on the road are some of the features badly stirred. Speaking of American young women he remarks.

"They have visions of lovers of which one just gets a glimpse, that it would take half a dozen first classmen, of widely varying types to satisfy. All the possibilities, they feel, are opening out to them, whereas in truth every thing is to close in on them". 1.

"Good looking girls who have slender and almost boyish figures, with no pelvic breadth to suggest maternity, the ancient fertility of Earth and Mother goddesses, yet proudly, insolently, carrying breasts that are exceptional among young white women, are now the favourite erotic symbols of Admass men. They are seen everywhere, in night clubs, like this one, in films, in advertisements, and above all in the little magazines reproducing art photographs". 2.

Priestley is an admirable observer of life, nothing escapes his ironic looks, and nothing escapes his pen; he pricks, but he never thrusts his dagger, he bamboozles but he never browbeats the fools he finds on the road, and in the hotel.

"In my hotel still as busy and noisy as ever, the delegates of Southern cookie Manufacturers, Associations, had checked out, the representatives of South Western shoe travellers Association were checking in; life unlike so much of the furiously hooting traffic, was on the move. And where, I had time to ask myself, now did it think it was going". 3.

As a writer of travel books Priestley will have an important place, the place of the last chronicler of England and U.S.A. before it was over run by globe trotters, trailer

2. Ibid p.130 3. Ibid. p.43.
tourists, hitch hikers, and international delegations of shoe-makers, ice-cream sellers, and charwomen. He has clarity, simplicity, naturalness and freshness; his work is never strained, there is no effort after some special effect, his lines are thought out and created in the tone of ordinary reflection raised by only a slightly greater tension of the idea, a more compact form, a more regular rhythm. He has the genius of the narrator, his narration is carried on with a very supple and very steady art, many different things which come as digressions are interwoven with an instinctive sure sense of measure.

79. H.V. Morton:

1. In the Steps of St. Paul-1936.
2. I saw two Englands-1943.
4. Middle East-1941.

H.V. Morton is a typical writer of travel books, a representative author who gives full historical background in an admirable manner, and then gives it a personal touch of a rare beauty. It is a journey in many dimensions, he travels through time and space, and through the human mind; he travels through history and through the present day cities of men and manners and different climates, and the reader travels through a land of imagination created before him by this Walt Disney of travel literature. He has a serene attitude of mind, and he gives no special preferences, and no prejudices hinder his work, he looks at history romantically and gives only those facts which have in them hidden the seeds of poetic romanticism. There is no doubt a reflective quest bearing on the moral problem of man, and the greatest problem is that of man's life, death and change that time works; he has a taste for erudition, but his analysis is not carried too far; he
combines history with philosophy, poetry, and travel. It has without effort and quite naturally, the qualities of form-
arrangement, orderliness, dignity of style and clearness of language. But he has his limitations - he is no judge of human character; he never describes a single living character of importance in his vast travels; he has little interest in what men and women surround him in places of antiquity, they interest him only when they remind him of ancient times. He is too absorbed in the past to give a detailed account of the scenes and sights of today. There are very few good descriptions of the present day scenes of historical sights; on the whole his work is clear lively and reads pleasantly; he has made a judicious choice of the details of history.

IN THE STEPS OF ST. PAUL - 1936

The very name of St. Paul calls up memories of great days, and the dangerous ages of Christianity, and it carries with it all associations of persecution, conversion, life long devotion, journeys by many lonely roads, and over stormy seas, meetings with men and the rulers of men. It is not a simple journey, but a great pilgrimage, it is a real journey in the footsteps of the Apostle. With his wide and accurate knowledge of history and his poetic imagination he makes it a great literary creation. He touches the problems of life, death, and the sense of waste and futility give grandeur and sublimity to the story.

"I took a farewell glance at the ruins lying in the shelter of the hill. Generations of men had grown up and had been harvested like corn, and like corn had left no trace, but this furrow on the plain that once had been the 'human colony of Philippi'."

"Outside the Cathedral (at Famagusta) I noticed a stone, now used as a mounting block. It was the base of a statue, and bore the words in Greek "The city of Salamis Offers this statue to the Emperor Trajan". 1.

Once the aqueduct is broken the life of the city is ended. Asphodels will grow in the cracks of the agora, the roofs will fall, crushing the marble shelves of libraries; birds, will nest in the dry cups of public fountains, and the jackal will nurse the young in the temple court*. 2.

The description of the beautiful places is more subjective than objective, he either envelopes the whole scene in his own feelings or in the feelings inspired by memories of the past days. He can evoke old slumbering memories with a magic power, but very rarely gives a full description of a place or a building as it is seen today. On seeing the Parthenon he remarks:

"As I drew near to this inspired building I said to myself, "I have seen the pyramids, Karnak, Abu Simbel, Baalbec, Tingad and a hundred other remains of the ancient world, but you are the most lovely thing I have ever seen, you are the only ruin on earth that a man would care to see again and again; and I would like to climb this hill to see you every year until the end of my life". 3.

He looks at history romantically, and the beautiful colours fall glowingly on the scenes and sites of these ancient lands.

"St.Paul must have known this moment; the grey light, the star light, the cool wind, the dusty cargo, the smell of beasts and tar, the movement of the mast against the sky, the smooth pressing forward, and the rhythmic hiss of water running back along the sides of the ships. It was good to stand on deck, thinking that this ship might be Castor and Pollux*. 4.

St.Paul's escape from the city of Damascus again appeals to his romantic spirit. 5. Humour is used very rarely but it has fine effect of relief.

2. Ibid., p.136
3. Ibid., p.268
4. Ibid., p.1
5. Ibid., p.41
Two hundred Syrian goats fattened on the spring pastures of Oranjestad were driven aboard at Alexandria; they looked remarkably like the annual congress of some learned society. These creatures filled the ship with a rank pagan smell and a violent life. They leapt on the bulwarks as if about to commit suicide or to deliver a thesis. 1.

This journey through Biblical times has beauty of style and charm of simplicity. He is not a proud pedantic soul parading his own pet theories; he accepts the generally accepted facts but gives them an artistic and poetic beauty. He is capable of lighting the dead stones and fallen pillars with life.

I SAW TWO ENGLANDS - 1939

Morton saw England, peaceful sleepy England, just before the War, and the furious England making tanks and many guns just after the declaration of War; here are two facets of the same picture. England combines strength with simplicity, charm with deadly power of defence, and fierce love of home-land. But apart from that the book shows the men living a calm and quiet life in the isolated corners of the Island, with many sweet memories of battles long ago, and the heroes who sleep in the dusky graveyard with the tinkling of sheep bells heard in the distance. He gives the book a quaint and affectionate touch by giving a strange long title to every chapter. For example:-

Chapter One: I go Kent. I visit Quebec House at Westerham, Hever Castle where Anne Boleyn lived; Chevening, the home of Lady Hester Stanhope, Penshurst the home of Sir Philip Sidney, and Knowle, the home of Sackvilles. 2.

It is a journey of love, a truly sentimental journey and it has mellowness and charm of an old world travel book. The picture of England which he gives is a lovely picture, and he conveys the feelings of joy and delight, open air and sunny mornings in a language that is

charged with emotion. This tone of personal tenderness lifts the book above the ordinary level. It is less poetic than his 'In the Steps of the St. Paul, but it is more an affair of the heart than any other book. He looks at every hamlet and cottage, every hill and old tree with love, and pride. He has no eyes for the ills of society, and he never probes into the social and economic problems as Firestone does in his book, The English Journey.

"Among the precious memories of travel in this country are those moments when after a breakfast of bacon and eggs and marmalade, a man stands upon the steps of a village inn, lighting the first pipe or the first cigarette of the morning, as he contemplates a day of idle wandering. The sun rises, the shadows shorten, the postman goes his round, children come along swinging their school satchels, the door steps are swept, cloths are shaken from the windows, women pause in the village street to exchange some domestic importance, there is a sound of boots crunching the gravel of the road, the bright jingles of harness and the sound of horses leaving the church-yard alms for the fields. It is all so bright, so comprehensible, so sane, so settled, and so old". 1

He recounts with pride his visits to the houses of worthies who are dead now, but whose ghosts seem to walk about in moonlit night, and share the life of dreams with all those who can see with the eyes of imagination.

"As soon I entered this room of the Duke of Wellington it captured me completely. Its sternness, its simplicity, its touch of almost priggish discomfort, and its lonely pathos seemed to reflect the life that had been lived there. It has been kept whether by accident or design, I don't know, almost exactly as it was the day that he died. Nothing has been altered. You almost expect the door to open and see the old Duke, hook nosed and silver haired, glide in with a frosty gleam of blue eyes". 2

His love of history prevails throughout the book, and enhances the effect.

2. Ibid. p. 88.
A TRAVELLER IN ROME - 1957.

The poetry of life seems to have departed with the coming of the age of aeroplane, men no more stand on tiptoe to look up at high buildings, but they look down upon them from the air. H. V. Morton's 'A Traveller in Rome', demonstrates how the changed conditions of life have affected travellers and travel literature, H. V. Morton who is highly poetic in his accounts of inaccessible places like the ancient Biblical sites, and the oasis like Mersa Matruh in the Libyan Desert gives a dull and colourless account of the great historically colourful city of Rome. Familiarity breeds contempt, he himself confesses that 'a Visit to Rome is not a matter of discovery, but of remembrance'.

"I thought how preposterous it was to be speeding through the sky to Rome, many of us unaware of the great barrier which awed and terrified our ancestors, while I look down trying in vain to identify the passes - the Mont. Cenis, the St. Gothard, the Great St. Bernard, and the little and the famous Brenner." 2

It may be the sobering effect of the years or an effect of decadence that in this great city he gives considerable attention to hair dressers' saloons, and the gestures of the people walking through the streets. All the great themes of history have been exhausted in every way; historians, poets, essayists, religious thinkers, have dug deep into the foundations of the city and for a casual traveller it is impossible to create anything new which may reflect a true image of this city. He disdains simply to glean from the rich garners of others and his romantic imagination feels shy to fly in the face of such thick clouds of memories. Rome is too proud a mistress to yield soon, and the author is too honest to boast,

1. Ibid., p. 13.
2. Ibid., p. 16.
that he has conquered her, it is hardly an amorous affair, he has not the dashing grace of a young man.

"The street life beneath my window would have been completely comprehensible to Juvenal or Martial, especially the food shops with their hot sausages, and the barbers with their constant succession of near-gilded youth with glossy locks. Misliking the necessary act of going to a barber, I am always fascinated by the great number of men in Latin countries who enjoy it. In Rome as in Madrid you see the same crowd of jolly happy men with towels round their necks, gazing at themselves with approval in the mirror, and cracking jokes with the barber". 1

"The landscape of Rome is itself declamatory: upon roofline stand hundred of gesticulating saints, their garments tossed about in baroque breeze, their fingers admonishing, pointing and blessing. The undulating architecture with which the church in the 17th Century expressed its satisfaction with the counter reformation is itself a gay, inspiring background for gesticulation". 2

There is a faithful record of his visit to all the important churches and other important buildings but it has little or no literary merit. Passages where he recalls his old powers are very few, they show that there is still something in the embers. 3 Norton is out of his element in this postwar world, and his grasp of things is rather feeble. His book 'Middle East', is already discussed in the section on Asia. Judged as a whole Norton must be given high credit for his achievement.

1. FOR THE LOVE OF ENGLAND:

2. St. J. Ramsay Macdonald. (1866-1937)

3. AT HOME AND ABROAD - 1936

Politics and Travel are deeply related in this age, probably the politicians travel most: Churchill, Roosevelt.

1. A Traveller in Rome - London - 1956 p.18
2. Ibid., p. 30.
and great leaders of nations must have travelled thousands of miles during the Second Great War, and they travel with the proverbial seven league boot. They have no time to write their impressions of different places, but when they do it is a unique experience to read these books of travel. Their works possess a down to earth reality, and an encyclopaedic knowledge of men and affairs; they are in a position to give their opinions based on authentic information, and they take things with greater seriousness and sense of responsibility. Travel literature being only a hobby gets their greatest affection and loving care, it is not a search for material as in case of Somerset Maugham nor an escape from life as in D.H. Lawrence. A sense of dignity, an oriental attitude, an altitude that ignores all mean things of life, courageous originality, and a serenity that comes after the struggle of political life - are some of the characteristics of travel books, written by politicians.

"I do not know why it is, and have often thought upon it, that walkers and wanderers have so generally fallen into the harry of ex-communicating politics and politicians. There is just a touch of vanity and self appreciation in the fraternity, a self superiority, which is a weed in the garden of their high delight. They should pull it up, for no one is better equipped for doing homage to the east or for pricing the freedom of the open air and the glamour of the blue of heaven, and the fairness of the landscape beneath than one who as a craftsman creator is moulding human affairs so that, as the generations end, he may be able to survey his work, and feel that it is good and is evolving according to a desirable plan."

Ramsay MacDonald is romantic and mystical in his attitude towards travel, his spiritual and poetic approach to travel has a refreshing quality about it; it is a rare quality and a delicate sensibility, something unexpected in a

1. At Home and Abroad - London - 1936 p.11.
political man busy with the rough and tumble of life. Man travels on this earth only but once, and clouds of mystery cover his lonely ways on this road which is to be travelled never again.

"The years unroll, time returns, ways trodden long ago, are trodden again; a paling cheek feels the nip and the glow it did not one frosty morning going out into the fields far back in the mists of years; a gorgeous evening spent in satisfying a tiredness of body which soothes the soul beholding a sunset from an inn window which foot cannot now find, comes back from the back; the song of the mavis in thickets in a spring gloaming which has passed into the night a generation ago, pipes sweet and clear from the twilight plantations of Elysium". 1

He has definite views on the art of travelling, and its benefits, he knows the advantage of having a companion of the way, and of solitude in other places.

"He who has wandered far lays by a rich possession to be enjoyed when evenings become long and firesides become solitary. Moreover it is a capital that does not diminish, by use, but like the widows cruise of oil increases as it is drawn up". 2

He has full faith in the magic power of these memories, and wishes to put them on paper to recall them whenever he likes to share them with others. This faith of his makes it a sort of book of confessions; he gives travel the authentic grandeur and dignity of a prophetic pre-occupation.

So one of the reasons why I give these papers to the printer and publisher again, is a selfish one. I should like to be able to put my gatherings of potent memory magic together, place them on my shelves, with others of similar virtue, and when the desire comes upon draw up an ample chair by my hearth, stretch out my hand, and go a journeying again. No one can share the companionship they will give to me, and yet I fain would hope that they lead others to the enjoyment of this earth, with gracious scenes, and its stored treasures. It is a very beautiful companion of to life. Indeed I have always found the earth and life to be in love with each other". 3

Ramsay Macdonald is truly in love with England, and all that is English, it is while describing the home scenes that his style glows, and the inspiration carries him to

eat heights*. It is sheer poetry that he writes, and it is
of the stuff that romance is made of.

"Blessed is the man who has a resting place from his
wanderings, and a fireside of memories for his comfort, whose
longing to be there is not only a mood which possesses him when
tiredness is upon him, but an abiding need of his active life
to cross at times, a known threshold and to sit upon a familiar
chair. And if in that place he meets faces who though vanished
in the flash dwell there and wait faithfully, and for his coming,
beak him company and bid him adieu with a hope that he will
soon return, thrice blessed is he". 1

"Macdonald is an artist with many powers, he can catch
to colour and spirit of a place in a few words2, the wind
and weather are made living realities when they come and knock
at the door3, he meets the ghosts of old worthies at every
street corner, and he feels the sap of life rising up in the
Downs5.

"Then in the night the hale came, viciously it rattled
on the pins demanding an entrance". 6

His journeys in other lands are clearly and simply narrated,
but they lack the lyricism of the heart which England alone can
awake. His other book is 'Wandering and Excursions'-1925.

It is a study of the very face of the earth, men and women
do not come in; his heart-beat quickens on seeing the roundness
of the barrows, and the regularity of that chain of majestic
mountains. The lie of the land, the shape of the trees, the
size of hills, the vastness and silence of the plain are features
simple enough, but they give rise to emotions of a highly noble
type; history does not count for much, human behaviour and
character too are neglected he analyses the character of the
Downland as if it were some living character, the care be bestow
wonts upon it is worthy of some masterpiece of the Almighty.

2. Ibid, p. 23.
3. Ibid, p. 36.
5. Ibid, p. 91.
His imagination reveals many a secret that the Downland denies to explorers and geographers; he reads the symbols of a high romance in the scattered stones of Stonehenge and the barrows scattered in the country.

"With the exception of Edgara's description of Dover's cliff in King Lear, and scattered utterances evoked by Salisbury Plain and North Downs, the rest of the spacious and magnificent region remains all but unsung". 1

Like an artist he takes delight in the shape, form, and outline of the Downland.

"This avoidance of sharp angles, of stress and contortion, the style of the Downland is its most individual behaviour. Its repose and harmony of life are unique in English landscape and you realise in contemplating them what insight is shown in the phrase, 'that chain of majestic mountains'. 2

The beauty of the Downs is like that of the sky, there are illimitable distances and a mysterious solitude, they inspire feelings of primitive fear and awe.

"I have at times felt my pulse quicken with something that was not exulting in the high place. It was fear, fear of the loneliness and vastness, and majesty of the scene, the fear of a child of the Machine age. It has been with contrary feelings that I have passed day after day wandering the downy solitude, thankful that I was able to escape for a time from the anxieties and the tribulation our period imposes upon all of us, and regret that there are so few to whom the self heavenly inheritance of the English Downs is anything but a name". 3

Poetic conceits, romantic imagination, a deep insight into the heart of the hills, and a profound love of shapes and forms are some of the features of his style. He finds hidden psychological meanings in the features of the landscape, he tries to unravel the mystery of the forms, and their mutual similarity: the Long Man he considers a symbol of the past between mankind and the hills.

"I wish I had space to try and analyse why it is that parallels and similarities delight the traveller. It is because his own journey is also double, backwards along the paths of memory as well as forward, to his destination".

1. 'English Down Land - London - 1936 - Batsford, p.2,
2. Ibid, p. 4,
3. Ibid, p. 8
4. Ibid, p. 17,
5. Ibid, p. 89
The book is a labour of love, he never enjoyed writing a book so much as this one; it is a book of personal travel, adventure and observation. In spite of all its romantic and imaginative beauty there is something uncertain and uneasy about the style; he seems to weigh his words and measure his sentences. He seeks simplicity clothed in romance, romanticism quickens his sensibility but intelligence prunes its feathers. He is in harmony with his contemporaries he has the style of Orwell with romance added to it: humour, irony, ramifications and digressions, studies of character, social and economic affairs never form a part of this book.

82. **James Tulle - England: I Love Best - 1934.**

English men love England in various ways, like poets, like artists like historians - they have given excellent accounts of houses and hamlets, hills and downs, Kings and Queens, and other notables of all ages - it is an abiding love, and a mad love, a love that cannot be denied; it is in their blood; they are born with it, and they live with it. And it is the love of the simple things, not of a philosophy and a great heritage, the spirit that shines through these pages has sincerity, and childlike simplicity, and this love affects their style too. They are rarely rhetorical when describing this love, it comes in simple words of simple men, they use simple anglo-saxon monosyllables, and bombastic scholarly words are reserved only for affairs of the world - not those of the heart. Literature of travel in England is actually a literature of love; James Tulle goes through England, with love and laughter; humour and delicate personal remarks - make it a lovely account of travel; with a little more

concentration he would have attained some similarity with Hillaire Belloc. He has no irony and mockery, no history to prop up the simple narrative, no social and economic considerations. Priestly, he is not a journalist dealing with current events. He is a simple robust lover of the land; and he laughs at the modern motoring lovers going at break neck speed through the country like crazy old men. His prose is just like blank verse, it is all sheer poetry and simply by arranging the type his paragraphs can we made to read as stanzas. For example:

"In that part of Saxon Somerset
Where great elm trees, grow
As they grow not elsewhere
A man will find that Peace,
Which walks hand in hand
With quietude". 1.

Not only the form and arrangement of sentences is poetic, even the spirit and subject are of real poetry.

"Stand a mile or so from Priddy in or about the time of autumn's glory, stand there alone towards eventide and sunset, waiting for the sun to sink slowly over towards the Severn Sea, and the moon to rise eastwards in all her splendour. Then as the shadows fall and all is still, still as it was two thousand years ago, a little of the spirit of Mendip will be with you on these hills". 2.

Such use of prose is sheer witchery; it is magic of words; but he does not weave it everywhere; the uneven nature of the book is its main defect. He has similarities with Cobbett whom he quotes very often; but his softness and sweetness is more alluring than that of the political minded chronicler of the English roads. Nothing like his enchanting description of morning and evening is found any where except in Coleridge.

"Night came slowly over the cornfields, the moon came up all glorious and golden with a tinge of roses red, and I was glad. Glad because with all the noise and change and wear and tear of modern industrial life, I had seen that waggon and horses with their load of harvest corn against the sky, and had seen the harvest moon". 3.

2. Ibid.p.229.
3. Ibid.p.53.
Humour that gives a light and delicate colouring to the story is of a purely English type, it is the humour of Punch.

"He looked neither to the left nor to the right, his heart was in Scotland. Every car he saw he passed. His heart was in Scotland, our bodies were in England, and several times, might have been buried there, so desperate was he in his quest for trout". 1.

There are other interesting anecdotes, but they are not a natural part of the story, and are added to it unnecessarily. A drowning man when rescued asks 'if it is Wansford in England'. A farmer asserts that 'not Kentishmen but men of Kent', fought against William the conqueror. It is a lovely book full of the true love of England.


It is a fine study rugged, robust, forceful and strongly hammered - a study worthy of a race of river men, pilots, tugmen, watchmen and others, who live their lives on the bank of this old romantic river. It is an immortal river, with turbid water and bleak banks, a wilderness of crumbled cliffs around and melancholy woods with drooping leaves. The story is told as Masefield would like it to be told, but it lacks his poetic touch and loving care, it has the detailed information of Mark Twain's life on the Mississippi, but it has no humour to relieve the gloom that prevails through out, there is some glimpse of the pursuers of Moby Dick, but he has no symbols of Herman Melville. His prose moves with a crushing and corroding vigour; it has the quality of a bull dozer, he has no literary tricks but the simple forceful narrative power. The tide and its approach the river and its gloomy shores, the salty oldmen who are the creatures of this melancholy river are the subjects which he

deals with. He has the authenticity of a professional sailor and he uses poetry for writing his log.

"Whenthe mist gropes blindly from the river in the night and wanders cold and pallid through the waterside streets it blurs the darkness with blank and melancholy shades. It drifts through the defiles of ware-houses and along the fishers of 'Tapping streets, veiling their dejection with a cobwebbed curtain and deepening their silence. The night grows bleared and eyeless. Life ebbs from it and leaves it barren of all hues except the hue of death". 1.

Men too are described with a hand that would have cut marble with great skill.

"I fear that Alfred Gee has ended his long vigil now, he was very old when last I heard the salty accents of his voice, but to me he will always remain the pattern and model of all the watchmen of the Thames. He had a tough grained face, piercing blue eyes, a flood of talk that gushed jovially when he came ashore at each month's end, and the simple friendliness of a man whose days have been spent in solitude". 2.

For him the river has infinite variety, and a richness of history and associations, it is an immortal river for ever flowing calmly to the sea.

"Age has not withered but rather enlarged its infinite variety. On its waters and along its shores are rich treasures of character and scene." 3.

There is an abundance of interesting material gathered in a lifetime, and a style ribbed and edged with steel and used with titanic strength.

C. Some books of Mediocre Merit.

E.V.Lucas- Vorley Roberts, Philip Gudalla, R.H.Bruce, Lokhart, Sir Arnold Wilson, Sir Philip Gibbs, Douglas Reed, Kate O'Brien, Ada Galsworthy.

84. E.V.Lucas- A Wanderer in Rome -1926.

The book gives high hopes, the author who won a great name as a critic is simply bewildered outside the study, the old city of Rome proves more baffling than many tough problems of literature and philosophy. No doubt he gives full details of all the important places but he makes no effort to give the total impression or to convey the spirit of the place, it is

merely a guide book, though it begins with a great motto. "Go thou to home; stonce the Paradise, the grave, the city and wilderness".

It is wrongly called the account of a wanderer in home, he is not at all a wanderer, he is a regular and methodical visitor, who faithfully records whatever he has seen. This simplicity of subject combined with the extreme simplicity of style and language makes it a dull and colourless book.

- "Morley Roberts - ON THE OLD TRAIL-1927

It is an exceptionally original book with a quaint style, and rather startlingly new conclusions; it is a book with great emotional power, it is a boldly romantic account of a sentimental visit to a scene of exertion forty two years previously. But for his careless style, and indifference to formalities of literature like Mark Twain - he would be a first rank writer of the literature of travel; he possesses the soul of a wanderer, a tramp, a dweller of forests, and he is aware of his limitations.

"But how can an old timer go on the trail and camp in the wilderness and yet produce poems worthy of Keats and Shelley. I believe that if either of those poets had been forced into the wilds early in life and had become really hefty men they would have written verse something like mine, though it would probably have been better. No one can revert to the primitive life and write an Epipsichidion*. 1.

He is romantic and sensitive soul. The sight of people laughing and sporting at a place where he had laboured hard to build the Canadian Pacific railway fills him not with delight but with sadness. Youth is wasted in labours the fruit of which others enjoy, and he is waiting for a ticket for his last journey. He gives his real impressions, and frankly sentimental and gloomy personal feelings, he is too wise to care for an impression on the reader. He is a strange naively original psychologist and a student of the human heart.

1. ON THE OLD TRAIL-London-1927 Nash and Grayson; Forward, p.VIII.
2. Ibid., p.5. 3. Ibid., p.19.
"Travel may be mere adventure of the mind. We discover new things in ourselves. An earthquake happens, our prison walls crumble, we see the stars again ........... It is obvious that we can travel far in ourselves and come back with strange cargoes, if not with apes, and ivory and peacocks". 1.

For sheer originality, authenticity, naturalness, boldness of conjectures and quality of introspection, he stands apart as a type, the real woodman which Thoreau never was, and a real tramp which a man like E.V.Lucas can never become.


Guedalia is a great traveller in the sphere of history, it is a great privilege to go with him from land to land and city to city - as we would have gone - with Napoleon and other worthies. But it is quite a different affair to see him marching through U.-S.A. in search of depths which he never comes across. Leaving aside his excuses and apologies it must be admitted that he has little or no respect for that land. Asling leaves the American people with his terrible satire.

Chaplin rokes fun, and Philip Guedalla uses the weapon of irony and mockery, he is like a mild Stephen Leacock, or a furious Priestley. His irony comes towards the end of a paragraph and somewhere in the middle, and takes us by surprise; he is not quick or sharp in his attacks; he is slow a scholar as he is, he is brilliant but not charming, he is roguish not mischievous, he uses a thick club and takes it carelessly even when he is crushing something; the economic and social problems excite his interest, but he deals with them in the same spirit of mockery. He never indulges in any romanticism; he has no care for human character and never gives any good analysis or a character sketch or description of a beautiful scene. The trouble with him is his intellect; he cannot get rid of his habit of judging men and affairs - but it is

a habit which hinders the creative-faculty of a writer of travel books. He laughs at churches being run on business lines, and the organised undertakers who want to make a new Taj Mahal, and invite people to get buried on payment, there are buildings where to raise the number of storeys the ground floor is numbered 6th floor.

He laughs at writers who claim to probe into the secrets of American life.

"Having crawled buzzing slightly across a vast window pane, I felt that news of my adventure might interest some of the other flies - and perhaps the pane itself. I have described a surface; and surfaces, I warn the student, are superficial; Deeper studies may be safely left to those whose stay was briefer still".

"Once more this is no treatise. Treatises abound, so why write another, besides a wise observer does not reach conclusions after three months of observation. His stay has been too long for that. For he may safely dogmatise with freedom and precision on almost any subject in his first three days ashore".

He has no pity for lecturers like himself lecturing to inattentive and rich audiences just to earn their money, American architecture is ridiculed in a beastly manner, for him there is no American Architecture.

"The arrival was fantastic; a crowd of tiny sky - scrapers clustering at the water's edge to watch the big ship coming up the bay, a slow dance of buildings edging in front of one another to see us rounding the Battery, and then the immobile wave of the wand, a piled city standing quite motionless. Etched on the winter sky, it seemed to wait, struck into immobility and bearing its buildings up like some enormous caryatid. The monstrous silhouette stood waiting, and as the massed buildings stared across the water, one saw for the first time architecture quite unadulterated - sans background foreground, scenery, or any aids of any kind - just raw architecture."

To he looks at U.S.A. as only something fantastic and night-marish. The judgment is not properly balanced, and his style suffers because of this fantastic approach to the subject. He probably was fully equipped with the narrative

2. Ibid., p. 206.
3. Ibid., p. 145.
4. Ibid., Preface, XI.
5. Ibid., p. 115.
6. Ibid., p. 15.
powers to make it a great book, but he fails to do so.

87. R. H. Bruce Lockhart (1887 - ) Memoirs of a British Agent - 1932

Classified by many modern historians of literature, as a book of travel - Memoirs must be rightly accepted as a political book written by a man with sufficient literary powers, but this book as it is cannot be considered a great masterpiece of literature of travel. It gives an account of Sir Bruce Lockhart's early days in Malaya, and pre-revolutionary Russia. Malaya taught him an exotic romanticism which became the cause of unhappy love affairs with native women in Malaya and a Jewess in Russia. It has the reckless air of an English adventure and the spirit of a sensational book revealing not only important events but also ugly situations. He belittles his own great role in the political affairs of that great epoch, but the events which he emphasises are of the stuff out of which great literature is made.

"It amused me to see Madame Minin, a Moscow millionairess in lunching every Sunday, and playing bridge with her three husbands - two ex and one real, it showed a tolerance and an understanding which at that time were beyond the range of western civilization."

Some passages have a pseudo romantic air, but it goes off the rails before the end is reached. Inspite of all these occasional flourishes, it is wrong to consider it a literary book of travel, neither the style nor the form would permit such a consideration.


'Walks and Talks Abroad', and 'More Walks and Talks' classified as literature of travel by modern critics here and there are books of political lectures and reportage - made by a wandering political man; it is a good inquiry into the state of affairs abroad, but it is not literature, and that

Gibbs is a romanticist; he travels in the world of old and forgotten memories, his imagination meets at every corner the ghosts of kings and queens, heroes and common men; he loves the beauties of the past, and the beauties of nature. His style is simple, in fact conversational, but when his imagination is fired his language takes on a new sublimity, a new beauty, and charm. The land of his heart's desire is France, then comes ancient and medieval Italy; Switzerland, Germany and Austria and other places are a closed book for him, he reserves his irony and mockery for some lands, and his poetry and love for others. He has no eye for detecting beauty in the forms of hills and the vastness of plains, he loves no rivers and no seas; only lakes are held in esteem by him. Human nature does not interest him; he only studies national behaviour and modern states, truly it is not a book of discovery, but a book of remembrance. He seeks what he likes and lets his imagination roam where it will, but he does not try to understand every thing that he comes across; he feels, he never thinks. Beauties of nature speak in a universal language, so do old artistic relics and buildings, they speak the language of the heart, and the poet in him interprets this mystic language beautifully.

"How lovely was France in this month of May. Every mile was like a sonnet by Tonsard, that poet who loved the living flowers of France, and the eyes of its women, and their white necks and red lips. Every yard was a line by Du Bellay and the poets of Renaissance. The air was scented with May blossom which grew in all the hedges and the earth smelt sweet". 1.

"But around these Italian lakes beauty is almost too enchanting; one is aware of a languor overcoming one's spirit. The hustle and bustle of modern life seem so foolish and unnecessary. It is difficult to be active and aggressive. The air is warm and heavy with the scent of flowers. Beauty soaks into one's soul". 2.

2. Ibid., p.188.
His romantic imagination saves his book from becoming a dull study of contemporary conditions, he has sympathy and he can share the existence of the Kings and clowns who are no more. This imaginative touch is often repeated and the past and the present both merge to make a single reality.

"One hears in one's spirit the rhythm of Time's waves. One touches an old wall, a broken pillar, a stone within reach of one's hand in this darkness. There are very old vibrations in it. A Roman soldier leaned against it when Christ was talking to Peter on the lake of Galilee. A Christian girl leaned her head against it, and wept because her lover was waiting for the cages to open in the colosseum. This bit of masonry vibrated to the shouts of Roman crowds hailing a new Emperor, a General bringing back prisoners from Gaul or Britain". 1.

The Notre Dame Cathedral too is for him a haunt of many memories. European Journey is a vivid, simple, imaginative and romantic account of a tour of Europe, it is very much like a commentary of a film - the film too given in words. He possesses the powers of invective, but he uses the same sparingly.


It is not a travel book, and is another example of books hastily hailed as great master-pieces of travel. He describes the war preparations in Hitler's Germany; it is good journalism no doubt, he gives it a few personal touches by describing his infantile memories of cavalry leaving to take part in the Boer War. His prose is clear, simple, matter of fact, but it lacks an inner vigour and spiritual charm.

1. European Journey -London-1934 p.233,
2. Ibid.p.245
3. Ibid.p.132
91. KATE O'BRIEN - FAREWELL TO SPAIN -1937.

It is certainly a farewell, but it is not literature, Spain since the rise of Franco has been put behind an Iron Curtain, and travel literature has lost one spot on earth which has inspired many warm and feelingful books of travel, it is a land with a history, and a people with character; their very existence is poetic, and their art of proud and dignified living is an art of a rare quality, Kate O'Brien does not look so deep, but yet she is not devoid of sentiments which this land never fails to inspire.

"I write as a sentimental traveller in a country long suffering at the hands of such. But Spain must forgive last stragglers among her foreign lovers, as she has forgiven and condescended to the first. There will be no more sentimental travellers anywhere". 1

It is a journalistic book in a chatty style, she is not deeply interested in any special point of view; she is an average but articulate tourist, she has preferences and pet themes; but she never rises to a level which may ensure her a place in the history of the literature of travel.


Ada Galsworthy's book has importance as a source book for the study of John Galsworthy; they both travelled to many lands, and her notes of these travels are put together without much beauty of style and without any imaginative touch being given to it. It has no form, it is just a diary of a person recording mere facts; and these facts have not been sifted or rearranged, they do not possess the basic quality of human appeal and profundity of interest, and hence they cannot be rewritten in the form of short stories or novels. Still some research scholar could use this book to throw light upon Galsworthy's literary career.

1. Farewell to Spain - London -1937, p.3.
It is a simple personal account without any decoration or ornamentation, it covers all their tours and walks in Europe and U.S.A., North Africa and South America, but the finest appreciation is reserved for the home islands.

"Journeys in the Home Islands are so short that they hardly seem to come under the heading of travel. Yet what other land in all the world can compare with ours in intimate charm, and variety and appeal, its ever changing innocently lovely countryside and villages, hills and rainy streams with a touching deep rooted life of their own, far from courting the gaze of the passerby, they nestle unconscious of their beauty". 1

Her romanticism is a simple exhilaration of the heart, it has no philosophy and no special message; it is just a note book of happy days of tramping across the continents, and her preferences are simple, sincere, instinctive; there is not much reasoning in the condemnation of places she does not like.

"American water ways, rivers and lakes are mostly lacking in charm. Probably they are too big, the rivers too lacking in banks, the lakes too lacking in focus. They all have the look of being unloved, that they are conscious of being so much water in every body's way, water that must be dodged or bridged as quickly as possible. Once crossed or circumvented one never thinks of them again". 2

The intoxication that comes upon her is simply that of travel, just physical travel and that too is a very mild and temperate affair.

"Among those hills there was a kind of intoxication that led us always far from roads and paths, always out to the unknown, scrambling, sliding, often wandering how on earth we would get further or back, seldom getting lost, always happy and always without guide, not that we had any dislike to the race of guides, very far from it, but because the whole intoxicating game would have vanished or have worked out differently". 3

2. Ibid. p. 193.
3. Ibid. pp. 21, 22.