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CHANGES IN THE CONCEPTION OF
ENGLISH LITERARY UTOPIAS,
1850-1950.



MEMORANDUM

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Declaration by Adviser.

I certify that this Dissertation is the work of Miss Ingfid Hallgren; that it was composed by her, under my supervision, during the Academical Year 1957 and 1958; and that Miss Hallgren has fulfilled the requirements of Ordinance 61 (General No. 23) of the Commissioners under the Universities (Scotland) Act 1889, and of the University Court Ordinance 277 (St. Andrews No. 50).

Adviser.

Declaration.

I hereby declare that the following dissertation has been composed by me, and that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree.

Declaration of Qualifications.

I matriculated at Lund University, Sweden, in September 1935 and pursued studies in English, Old Norse and Literature, leading to a Fil. Mag. in May 1940.

During the academical year 1943-44 I read German at Lund University.

I hold a full-time teaching appointment at Kristianstad Training College for Teachers; and I have worked simultaneously for a Swedish Fil. Lic. degree under Professor Staffan Björck at the University of Gothenburg.

During the academical year 1957-58 I was a matriculated student at the University of St. Andrews and devoted my whole time to a course of Higher Study under the guidance of Mr. R.M. Logan.

The research on which this dissertation is based was carried out by me in the University Library at Lund, and in the University Library of St. Andrews. Various books have been consulted in the British Museum and in the Scottish National Library.

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Changes in the Conception of English
Literary Utopias, 1850-1950.

Introduction.

This is a study of English utopias during a hundred years; a period chosen because of the great and rapid changes which then took place in utopian fiction, in quantity as well as in essence. It is difficult to decide whether the enormous increase in the number of such books (an increase which shows the popularity of what H.G. Wells in 1905 called "this declining form of literature") is not as significant as the changes in their contents.

As this is a literary study, the actual society, from which the utopian writers set off on their excursions, has been regarded as a background; and utopian fiction has not been used as a means of revealing changes in society. The main object of this survey is to trace the change of meaning in the term "utopia" which took place during this period. For after the First World War there appears a new type of utopian fiction, in which the form of the old
or/

or classical utopia is preserved but the contents are entirely different.

The British Encyclopaedia still gives as its definition of utopia; "an ideal commonwealth whose inhabitants exist under perfect conditions," a definition which covers what may be called "classical" utopias. Sometimes "perfect conditions" must be modified into "what the author regards as perfect conditions," for writers of utopias often reveal themselves as dictatorial, believing that their own tastes and preferences necessarily make for universal happiness. Indeed the character and the circumstances of the writers often go far to explain the way in which they handle the utopia; and it has therefore been necessary to consider the part played by the social background and the personal idiosyncrasy of the more important writers in bringing about the changes which it is the purpose of this study to trace.

Evidently the definition quoted above does not cover the new type of utopia which came into existence after the First World War and which is the dominant variant in the 1930's and 1940's. For in this modern form of the utopia the author describes a society in which he would not like to live, but in which he believes as a frightening possibility./

possibility. These negative types have been called "anti-utopias," or "counter-utopias"; sometimes, in extreme cases, they have been referred to as "nightmares."

A look at any list of "utopias" or "ideal commonwealths" will show that the term has been used to cover varying forms of literature. However strictly I have tried to confine myself to works covered by the classical definition and to the new type mentioned above, there have still been problems of selection. This survey is concerned with English literary utopias, and accordingly Bellamy's Looking Backward and Hertzka's Freeland, for example, have not been included, in spite of their undoubted influence on the English utopia. "Millennia" and practical social schemes have not been considered, nor "one-man-utopias" like Shiel's The Purple Cloud or works of the "Robinson Crusoe" type. Science fiction - a wide field since the latter half of the 19th century! - has not been taken into account, except for a passing reference in connection with H.G. Wells's early work. One-sided works on "women's rights" and the like have also been excluded. Sometimes it has been extremely difficult to draw the line between utopia proper and entertainment fiction in which there is an element of the utopia; and the author is conscious of a certain arbitrariness/

arbitrariness in the choice of material, which was unavoidable.

The main outline is as follows: Chapters I-IV deal with utopian fiction up to 1914; Chapter V discusses the War years and the change in the conception of utopias that begin to take place in the 1920's; Chapters VI and VII deal with the period up to 1950; and Chapter VIII is a summary.

CHAPTER I.

The first twenty years of the century 1850-1950 is a barren period as far as utopian fiction is concerned. Various reasons have been given to explain this fact; most of them rather elaborate ones modelled on Toynbee or introducing terms like "utopian neurosis" that convey very little.¹ The study of a work like Robert Pemberton's The Happy Colony makes one prefer simple explanations for this scarcity: probably one of the main reasons was that, with the growth of the various Socialist movements, and of such schemes as those of Robert Owen utopian thought found an outlet in practical social work for the immediate future.

Marie Louise Berneri has pointed out that the utopias of the nineteenth century on the whole lack the breadth of vision that one finds in the utopias of the Renaissance and the seventeenth century.² It is true that this is a period of beginning materialism: a definite shifting of emphasis from ethical values to material ones. The happiness/

1. See T.F. Clarke, The Nineteenth Century Utopia, The Quarterly Review, Jan 1958, pp 80-81.

2. Marie Louise Berneri, Journey through Utopia, p. 218.

happiness of man in this world becomes inseparably involved with notions of wealth, comfort and ease. Against the background of a singularly ill-adjusted industrial age this is perhaps not surprising; in any case it is very noticeable. [The Christian idea of suffering as an ennobling experience that God makes man undergo for his own spiritual good, as well as the conception of original sin, are naturally not to be found in utopian fiction, where, at this time, belief in the innate goodness of man prevails.]

As early as 1854 these conceptions are very clearly expressed in Robert Pemberton's The Happy Colony. Its author had previously written works on teaching methods and one philosophical work, Attributes of the Soul from the Cradle, and these interests combine to make his utopia what it is. Pemberton was deeply influenced by Robert Owen, and probably also by Fourier. His ideas on education are largely founded on Pestalozzi, with whom he would have become familiar through Owen. None of these men is mentioned in The Happy Colony, but the similarities between Pemberton's ideas and those of Pestalozzi could hardly be accidental.¹

There/

1. That Pemberton was familiar with Robert Owen is evident from An Address to the Bishops and Clergy of all denominations, and to all professors and teachers of the Christian World, on R. Owen's proclamation of the Millennial state to commence this year (1855)., published in London in 1855.

There is very little attempt at fiction in Pemberton's book; so little in fact that The Happy Colony is a borderline case between a utopia and a practical social scheme. The first two parts are dialogues in the manner of Plato, between the author and a Learned Friend, and the author-philosopher and a delegation of Working Men of Great Britain. The author is listened to with the most flattering attention; and, as soon as his hearers have grasped what is presented to them as revolutionary new ideas, they are instantaneously won over. The most elaborate trick Pemberton uses is the insertion of a dream that takes him to Switzerland, where he meets a man with a copy of Attributes of the Soul from the Cradle under his arm. In this way he is able to comment on the genius of that work.

The third section contains a plan for a Happy Colony, or rather ten identical ones, and a "Description of the Elysian Academy," complete with a map showing the lay-out of the rus-in-urbe community with the College buildings in the centre.

All this is done in the dullest manner possible, and one cannot help suspecting that Mr. Pemberton's "new" teaching methods were largely based on repetition; so much of/

of it is to be found in the presentation of his scheme. But in some respects it is also an audacious work: the author has seen that the ideas he advocates of man's goodness and perfectibility do not agree with the Christian dogma of original sin, and he does not try to gloss over this fact. He is decidedly unchristian in the way Robert Owen was: man is God's creation and as such "perfect and perfectible." Obviously, however, man is neither good nor happy, and the fault must be within society. Money is at the bottom of all evil; if the importance of labour was realised and "the labour Kingdom" established instead of a society founded on capital, all would be well, and the working classes, the only creative classes, would come into their own.

Having made this clear to the Learned Friend as well as to the Workmen of Great Britain, Pemberton outlines his practical scheme. As cheap land is difficult to come by, even in 1854, if one does not want to go to America, he decides to start his Happy Colony in New Zealand and to call the first town Queen Victoria Town. It would not be possible to begin life anew in the old world, rotten as it is with bad old customs, but if new communities grow up, one can expect them to spread, and finally the whole world would be covered with a network of Happy Colonies. This was/

was a common idea in Pemberton's day.¹

The influence of Fourier's phalanxes and Owen's parallelograms can be found in Pemberton's careful planning of his community centre - the main difference is that his is round. "You must --- discard, and for ever renounce, all crooked lanes, angles, narrow streets, filthy alleys and nasty courts and impasses."² Surprisingly little interest is given to the way this commonwealth works. Like Owen, he intends to form fairly small agricultural societies, each of 20,000 acres. The necessity for communism and equality are dealt with in a single sentence: "In the Happy Colonies there can be but one class of people - the workmen, the profits of whose labour will be shared equally among themselves."³ Having settled this without any fuss over details, Pemberton goes on to discipline, a subject dear to his heart. " --- the workmen of Great Britain must be perfectly aware of the absolute necessity of conforming, with regularity, to the rules and bye-laws which/

1. This scheme makes one think of some of the ideal societies that were founded in America in the nineteenth century, "the golden age of community experiences." According to Holloway, "over a hundred communities, with a total membership of more than one hundred thousand men, women, and children, were tried out in the course of the century." See Mark Holloway, Heavens on Earth, Utopian Communities in America, 1680-1880, p. 18.
2. R. Pemberton, The Happy Colony, p. 81.
3. R. Pemberton, The Happy Colony, p. 113.

which their own society shall adopt ----." ¹

If the economic structure of the Happy Colony is very vaguely sketched, one gets plenty of detail when Pemberton writes about education. For this is primarily a teacher's utopia: the child is regarded as a "carte blanche, to any system, to any language, to any manners --," in short, an ideal raw material for the teacher. The only thing to do was to grasp the principles of the "natural system" and then go ahead and bring about "a state of happiness and perfection." The subject-matter and methods are mainly what Pestalozzi recommended: object lessons, learning by doing, arts and crafts etc. There is, however, much more emphasis on languages, of which a child was expected to know seven or eight at the age of twelve; and "more especially on the dead languages, because every person of taste, science and learning is so fully convinced of their importance and intrinsic value." This seems almost as optimistic as when he recommends "all kinds of needle-work - hemming, darning, sewing, basting, running, gathering, stitching, and button-hole making" for boys and girls under seven!

As can be seen from ^{the} above, Pemberton had an inordinate love/

1. R. Pemberton, The Happy Colony, p. 111.

love of details, and one is not quite sure that man's innate goodness will make it possible for the Colleges "to open at six in the morning with a beautiful hymn of adoration and thanksgiving to the Creator ---." However, he himself was sure that "the creative laws" would necessarily produce "perfection and happiness in the Colony," and the book contains one lyrical outburst which expresses its author's pathos: "Heaven grant that all good minds will unite in carrying out this beautiful system of making man wise, affectionate, good, and happy! To have lived to see a glimpse of the perfection of man - to see, as it were, the first stone laid in the Happy Colony, and the divine millennium looming in the distance - refreshes my heart and causes a thrill of joy to run through my whole frame."¹

If Pemberton's work must be regarded as a serious attempt at a constructive utopia, so much so in fact that parts of it turned into a blueprint of an educational scheme, Hermann Lang's The Air Battle 1859, is a rather naive example of early utopian fiction. It is another borderline case, this time of a subliterary kind, and would not have been included in this study if it did not show up the enormous improvement in quality that took place in utopian fiction in the 1870's. Hermann Lang was "Professor an der polytechnischen/

1. R. Pemberton, The Happy Colony, p. 49.

polytechnischen Schule in Karlsruhe" and wrote a couple of books on Chemistry, good enough to find their way into the British Museum. The Air Battle seems to be his one excursion into fiction. Judging by the impossible story and the stilted style his talents did not lie that way.

Lang does not pay much attention to the type of society that is supposed to exist 5000 years hence. "The poor worn-out whites" have succumbed to the blacks, and Africa has become the political centre of the world, ruled by warring kings and scheming ministers. There is no attempt at science fiction, except a vague description of "aerials," each looking like "a huge monster with long wings and a bright fiery eye in its head, and tall thick spines on its back." Deep dislike of Great Britain makes the author annihilate most of it, leaving only a tiny island, 40 miles by 60, inhabited by semi-barbarians.

The constructive idea of this book is the ultimate blending of the black and white peoples into one harmonious whole, symbolised by the marriages of Brunehilda and Harold Wynter to members of the new rulers of the world. The adventures of the brother and sister in the kingdom of Sahara form the greater part of the book. The story is fantastic, to say the least, but very amusing. Most of the villains have black souls and white skins, and should they/

they happen to have black skins they invariably become good before the book ends. No Trollope heroine could express herself with more dignity than Brunehilda does in awkward situations, "Unhand me, sir, instantly," is only one example of her command of language, even when she is "trembling inwardly."

After the king of Sahara has defeated the king of Madeira and white slave trade has been abolished, the book ends on an exalted note: "I have plenty of work for all of you; for although the war is concluded, the statesman's cares are not less particular, and this epoch of the world must not pass away without our taking advantage of it. Surely, we are near the end of time; for blacks and whites are united in one brotherhood, are free, and are Christians."¹

However, if remarkably few utopias were published in the 1850's and the 1860's, this period was followed by one of varied and interesting contributions in the early 70's. By coincidence the three most important ones were all published within the first two years of the decade, namely Bulwer Lytton's The Coming Race in 1870, Butler's Erewhon and Winwood Reade's The Martyrdom of Man in 1872. However different they may be in other respects, they have two things/

1. H. Lang, The Air Battle, p. 112.

things in common: none of them is a "classical" utopia, and they are all more or less concerned with the theory of evolution.

For the purpose of this study Erewhon is the most rewarding of the three, because it shows how the form of the classical utopia can be used as a vehicle for satire of the present while at the same time an ideal commonwealth is presented. Any utopia implies a certain criticism of contemporary conditions, but as a rule either the purely satirical or the purely idealizing element dominates. In Erewhon the two are blended in a unique way. But before I treat Butler's work more in detail, I want to discuss the other two briefly, especially Winwood Reade's The Martyrdom of Man, which is a most interesting example of what Darwinism could lead to.

Richard Gerber, whose study Utopian Fantasy appeared in 1955, is the first to stress the enormous importance of Darwinism for Utopian thought in the latter part of the nineteenth century. "The progressive attitude only becomes really powerful and realistic with the emergence of a new view which sees progress not only as a moral postulate, but as a historical reality derived from an observation of facts."¹ It is true that Darwinism needed/

1. R. Gerber, Utopian Fantasy, p. 8.

needed a few years to penetrate, but when it did it proved a great stimulus and appealed to ordinary people in a way that Mendel's laws of heredity have never done. It is also true that Gerber stresses the importance of evolutionism a little too much - the progress of science and technology, social conditions, the growth of Socialism etc. must all be taken into account - but for all that Darwinism gave utopians a starting-point.

Winwood Reade, who died in 1875 at the age of 36, was a strange mixture of novelist, explorer and philosopher. His unveiled atheism probably explains the carefully expressed sentiments in Dictionary of National Biography, but to writers of his own age and also of later times he has been something of a prophet. H.G. Wells and Beatrice Webb were influenced by him, and there was a new edition of The Martyrdom of Man as recently as in 1934. Reade firmly believed that, by studying the past one could foretell in what direction the world was moving, and he does not hesitate to draw his conclusions: the dominance of the strong and intelligent, the superiority of the white race over the coloured ones. Evolution and progress are key ideas: "So far as strength and swiftness are concerned, limits are placed upon improvement. But there are no limits/

limits to the improvement of intelligence. We find in the lower kingdom muscular power in its perfection, but the brain is always imperfect, always young, always growing, always capable of being developed."¹ His belief in progress is boundless, and so is his optimism. Man would "invent" immortality, would migrate into space and have the earth as a Holy Land to be visited "by pilgrims from all quarters of the universe."

Reade's moral values are very much those of Kipling's If - self-discipline, courage and chastity are the main virtues - and it is interesting to notice that he appealed not only to literary men but also to empire-builders like Cecil Rhodes and Harry Johnston. When Rhodes at the age of 20 read The Martyrdom of Man he found it a revelation, and Basil Williams has summed up Rhodes's creed as "a strange jumble of Darwin, Winwood Reade and Gibbon."²

Reade's/

1. Winwood Reade, The Martyrdom of Man, p. 414. Incidentally, it is interesting to compare Reade's visions with that of Rex Warner in The Aerodrome, published in 1941. "Science will show you that in our species the period of physical evolution is over. There remains the evolution, or rather, the transformation of consciousness and will, the escape from time, the mastery of the self, a task which has in fact been attempted with some success by individuals at various periods, but which is now to be attempted by us all. ---But this discipline has one aim, the acquisition of power, and by power - freedom." (pp. 206-07) For Warner this idea of "a new race of men" is frightening, and the cult of power and intellect immoral and evil.
2. Basil Williams, Cecil Rhodes, p. 49-50.

Reade's visions of the future of mankind do not take the form of fiction; but in Lord Lytton's The Coming Race we find ourselves among the best-sellers, and there is a wide gulf between Reade's passionate single mindedness on the one hand and Lord Lytton's amiable play with Darwinism on the other.¹ It is one theme among many others, such as religion, marriage, woman's place in society, the progress of science etc. Opinions on the importance of The Coming Race vary considerably, but for my part I do not think there is much reason to treat it as a monument of symbolism, as for instance Richard Gerber does. When for example, the hero has literally fallen into the subterranean world of the Vrilya and, quite naturally, feels afraid of its tall, strange-looking inhabitants, this is magnified into a symbol of ordinary man's "instinctive reaction before the evolutionary idea has been completely absorbed and turned into a new religion. The ordinary man involuntarily shies away from the superman, and is by no means comforted by the thought that he is a link in the historic chain of which superman is another link."²

1. See for instance the passage, dealing with three portraits belonging to the prehistorical age of three generations of philosophers, of which "the great-gfand-father was a magnificent specimen of the Batrachian genus, a Giant Frog, pur et simple." (pp. 131-32)
2. Richard Gerber, *Utopian Fantasy*, p. 19.

The interest of The Coming Race does not lie in the habits and customs of the Vrilya, fully as these are described. There is much stress on their gentleness and the absence of competitiveness. Women are bigger and stronger than men and the hero is at last brought back to this earth by one of them. Subterranean progress has been much faster, and one of the reasons is Vrilya, an "all-permeating fluid" which can be used for constructive as well as destructive purposes and would reduce any enemy to a heap of cinders within a second. The most interesting thing about the book is the question that is asked at the end: what would happen to us, if this superior race decided to invade the earth? Lord Lytton is most pessimistic: "Only, the more I think of a people calmly developing, in regions excluded from our sight and deemed uninhabitable by our sages, powers surpassing our most disciplined words of force, and virtues to which our life, social and political, becomes antagonistic in proportion as our civilization advances, - the more devoutly I pray that ages may yet elapse before there emerges into sunlight, our inevitable destroyers."¹ Nevertheless, although the author points out that our race may not be "the coming race," this can hardly be considered as a sign of/

1. Lord Lytton, The Coming Race, p. 280.

of pessimism, of the type found in "anti"-utopias; But by hinting at this unpleasant possibility Lord Lytton has become the forerunner of much literary and sub-literary fiction of the War-of-the-Worlds type, for one should not forget that there is much of the thriller in The Coming Race.

Of all the 19th century utopias none is so difficult to classify as Samuel Butler's Erewhon, for it is "neither positive - an example to be followed, nor negative - an awful warning."¹ Although Erewhon was published as early as 1872 it was tempting to take it out of its chronological order and treat it after Morris and Wells, because it sets off, not only the positive, optimistic, engaged attitude of these two writers, but also the wholly different atmosphere of the post-war nightmare type. For Butler uses the form of the utopia in a very personal way and creates a kind of detached, whimsical, topsy-turvy world.² Unlike most early utopian writers he does not create a commonwealth/

1. A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 144.
2. I find it doubtful whether I.F. Clarke is right in stating that Butler "shows an eagerness to smash false idols in church, state, education, and family life." (The Quarterly Review, Jan. 1958, p. 82). Whatever smashing Butler did was done in The Way of All Flesh, where he is personally engaged; not in Erewhon.

commonwealth, where he would have liked to live himself - Erewhon is pure make-believe, a clever parlour-game. Few things would have been more boring to Butler than an ideal commonwealth, and for a very good reason: there would have been no place for a Samuel Butler in it.

Few authors are so intimately known to posterity as Butler, and few have proved so enigmatic. The Way of All Flesh, the Note-Books, the memoir by Festing-Jones, who knew him for many years and shared his daily life - all this material shows a fascinating mind and a complex character. The conclusions drawn are very different - Philip Henderson for example gives a portrait of Butler that is very different from that of Malcolm Muggeridge. The facts of Butler's life are well-known. He "was born of rich but dishonest parents"¹ or, to put it in a more conventional way, at Langar Rectory, in 1835. In due course he went to Cambridge but refused, on principles of conscience, to go into the Church, and went out to New Zealand to become a sheep farmer in 1859. He was financially successful and did not actually dislike the life, though he was a little bored by his fellow colonists. After five years he sold his sheep-run and returned to live on his capital, devoting his life to painting and writing. In order to be able to/

1. H.F. Jones, Samuel Butler, p. viii.

to give his friend Pauli an allowance he speculated and lost his money. Until his father's death in 1886 Butler was financially dependent - a source of much bitterness. However, from 1887 he was able to live the kind of life he wanted, concentrating on literature, publishing his books at his own expense and comforting himself with the thought that "there can be no greater misfortune for a man of letters or of contemplation than to be recognised in his own lifetime. Fortunately the greater man he is, and hence the greater the misfortune that he would incur, the less likelihood there is that he will incur it."¹ His books were ignored or cut to pieces by reviewers, and in his lifetime he was known - if at all - as a queer person with odd notions on the theory of evolution, the authoress of the *Odyssey*, and Shakespeare's sonnets. His recognition was almost wholly posthumous.

Erewhon was the only one of Butler's works that was at all successful in his lifetime, and in later years its author attributed its success largely to the fact that it had been published anonymously. It is however not difficult to understand that it should have been successful in its own right, for it is both brilliant and amusing. It also happened to appear shortly after Lord Lytton's The/

1. The Note-Books of Samuel Butler, p. 367.

The Coming Race, and as it was supposed to be written by that famous author, it profited by the notice attracted by his work.

Apart from Viscount Samuel's An Unknown Land, of which more later, Erewhon is, as far as I know, the last utopia to be set in an unknown country, discovered after a long series of adventures.¹ For in 1872 it was still just possible to think of the earth as not yet entirely mapped out; and Butler, who had himself been prospecting for new land for his sheep-run, knew what it felt like to have unlimited possibilities looming beyond the nearest mountain-range. No wonder then that young Higgs in search of new country stumbles on his utopia in such a plausible way. "I crossed and recrossed the stream several times without difficulty, for there were many good fords. At one o'clock I was at the foot of the saddle; for four hours I mounted, the last two on the snow, where the going was easier; by five, I was within ten minutes of the top, in a state of excitement greater, I think, than I had ever known before. Ten minutes more, and the cold air from the other side came rushing upon me.

A/

1. I am not here taking into consideration fiction of the type of Craig's Ionia or Hilton's Lost Horizon, both set in distant parts of the Himalayas.

A glance. I was not on the main range. Another glance. There was an awful river, muddy and horribly angry, roaring over an immense river-bed, thousands of feet below me.

It went round to the westward, and I could see no farther up the valley, save that there were enormous glaciers which must extend round the source of the river, and from which it must spring.

Another glance, and then I remained motionless.

There was an easy pass in the mountains directly opposite to me, through which I caught a glimpse of an innumerable extent of blue and distant plains."¹

What could be more perfect than a passage like this!

Later on, when Butler describes Erewhon and its people he uses northern Italy as a model, mentioning Domodossola and Faide as examples of Erewhonian-looking villages, but the main part is based on his knowledge of New Zealand.

The origin of Erewhon was an article called Darwin Among the Machines that Butler wrote and published in New Zealand in 1863. Two years later it was followed by another on the same subject, but expressing the opposite point of view. These two articles form the basis of the chapters in Erewhon called The Book of the Machines.²

On his very first day in Erewhon Higgs notices the absence/

1. S. Butler, Erewhon, pp. 22-23.

2. Preface to the Revised Edition, 1901.

absence of all machinery, except the most primitive, and is reminded of mediaeval Europe. When he is found to possess a watch the disapproving Erewhonians take him to the Town Museum and show him a room full of broken, rusty machinery, some of it more advanced than any he had seen in his own country. He hands over his offending watch to the keeper of the museum as a gesture of reconciliation; but not until he has learnt the language does he realise the full implications of owning "machines." After a long civil war between "machinists" and "anti-machinists" Erewhon abolished and destroyed all mechanical inventions. This took place after the publication of a "Book of the Machines" whose argument was that machines might develop and become a menace to man. "--- what I fear is the extraordinary rapidity with which they are becoming something very different to what they are at present. No class of beings have in any time past made so rapid a movement forward. Should not that movement forward be jealously watched, and checked while we can still check it?"¹ Chapters XXIII-XXV are an amusing demonstration of the theory of Evolution applied to machines: "The writer attempted to support his theory by pointing out the similarities existing between many machines of a widely/

1. S. Butler, Erewhon, p. 144.

widely different character, which served to show descent from a common ancestor. He divided machines into their genera, subgenera, species, varieties, subvarieties, and so forth. He proved the existence of connecting links between machines that seemed to have very little in common, and showed that many more such links had existed, but had now perished. He pointed out tendencies to reversion and the presence of rudimentary organs which existed in many machines feebly developed and perfectly useless, yet seeming to mark descent from an ancestor to whom the function was actually useful."¹ The "machinists", on the other hand, argued that machines were to be regarded as a kind of extra limbs, and that every new invention added to the resources of that "machinate mammal," man.²

However, /

1. S. Butler, Erewhon, pp. 152-53.
2. This line of thought has lately been developed without any trace of irony in R.W. Davenport's The Dignity of Man, New York 1955. "He ('Industrial Man') has projected from himself mechanisms that give him the strength of hundreds, even thousands, of horses. His amazing tools, some of them bigger than the houses he lives in, endow him with power that dwarfs that of the legendary giants. Wheels extended from his body enable him to move faster than the wind and a 'stick' in his hand enables him to out-strip sound. He is possessed of claws with which to burrow miles into the earth and fins with which to swim under the surface of the sea, while antennae, surpassing anything known to Nature, give him the ability to see in the dark and to communicate with other men all the way around the globe. Man of the mid-twentieth century does indeed live as the ancients might have imagined the gods living, a creature of almost limitless extentions ----." (p.80)

However, the "anti-machinists" had their own way and Erewhon became a Utopia without machinery.

I have treated this at some length because I think that it shows up the peculiar quality of Butler's Erewhon better than any other part of the book. For here Butler touches on a problem that both Morris and Wells were later to treat very differently from each other and from Butler. Morris too turns away from machinery, but he does so because he sees it as a necessary basis for industrialiam, destroying all pleasure in work, turning the nation into rich and poor and destroying the beauty of the countryside. Wells, on the other hand, concentrates on its positive side, its possibilities for getting rid of tedious labour, making daily life easy and pleasant, setting people free for other things, But they both have one thing in common: They are aware of the social significance of the problem. They both realise that they live in a period of change and that it is vitally important that other people should see this too. They both want to shape the future; Butler does not. In his curious way he is neither looking backward nor forward/

forward - he seems to look at things upside down.¹

Once the false analogy between men and machines has been established, his argument is carried out with a devastating sense of logic.

There is one other subject on which Butler differs from most utopian writers, and that is money. Morris and Wells are closer to each other than Butler and Wells. For whereas Morris abolishes money altogether and creates a society run on pre-mediaeval, non-monetary lines, he is still aware of economic forces and the way they contribute to the shaping of society. He knew Marxist theories on the subject and was prepared to discuss economics as a social problem, though his solution was by no means the current Socialist one. Wells too considered himself as a Socialist and he too looked upon economic problems as fundamentally important to any society./

1. "It is further significant of the subconscious determinants of Butler's mental and emotional life that in the wealth of ideas on a wealth of social problems of great importance that adorn the pages of Erewhon there are none on any problem that concerns itself exclusively with labour or with women. Butler is thought of commonly as a radical, a great pioneer, and so he was; but he was also, in some aspects of his many-sided nature, a highly original conservative." Clare Stillman, Samuel Butler. A Mid-Victorian Modern, p. 89.

society. But he did not abolish money; he regarded it as a necessary and healthy stimulus. He himself had been poor and had made money, and so he believed that everybody, given the opportunity by a beneficent state, ought to make money. He had none of the respect for unearned income that is at the bottom of Butler's conception. For Butler's attitude is determined by his own personal circumstances: he expected to inherit a comfortable income (unless he so exasperated his father as to be cut off with a shilling) and although he sometimes blames his father for the expensive education that had made it impossible for him to earn his living, he far more resents his inconsiderate slowness in dying. It is significant that what little is said on the subject of money in Erewhon is said in the chapter dealing with relations between parents and children; for to Butler this was not a social problem, it was a private one. So after having ironically pointed out that "the relations between children and parents in that country are less happy than in Europe" he continues: "Money is at the bottom of all this to a great extent. If the parents would put their children in the way of earning a competence/

competence earlier than they do, the children would sooner become self-supporting and independent."¹

One is sometimes tempted to summarize Butler's attitude to life in the question: Why not the other way round? The best known example of this is the way illness is treated as a crime in Erewhon, whereas moral weaknesses and what we should call criminal tendencies are treated in hospital. No Erewhonian is ever supposed to suffer even from a headache, and doctors practise in secret, like witch-doctors, for "even the best were liable to be out of sorts sometimes, and there were few families that had not a medicine-chest in a cupboard somewhere."² Moral weakness can be condoned and the sufferers receive much sympathy from friends. How delighted Butler must have been with the newspaper report of a trial of a young man found guilty of theft which he inserted practically unaltered in Erewhon.³ The judge's summing up contained the following passage: "It is all very well for you to say that you came of unhealthy parents, and had a severe accident in your childhood that permanently undermined/

1. Samuel Butler, Erewhon, p. 123.

2. do. do. p. 89.

3. H.F. Jones, Samuel Butler I, p. 152.

undermined your constitution; excuses such as these are the ordinary refuge of the criminal; but they cannot for one moment be listened to by the ear of justice. --- There is no question of how you came to be wicked, but only this - namely, are you wicked or not?"¹ And the criminal convinced of pulmonary consumption, is sentenced to hard labour for life, with "two tablespoonfuls of castor oil daily, until the pleasure of the court be further known." Naturally in Erewhon health and beauty are considered as more important than anything else, and to offend in these respects is a serious offence. A.L. Morton suspects Butler of "a profound feeling that beauty and good health and good luck (in Erewhon misfortune is also punishable) are the supreme blessings and that men both are and ought to be rewarded for possessing them and punished for not possessing them. He certainly had a full measure of the belief of his class that if a man was poor or unfortunate it was probably his own fault."² But as this did not prevent Butler from satirizing the attitude towards crime in his day or from questioning English criminal justice, Morton is hardly justified in making this statement.

Several/

1. Samuel Butler, Erewhon, p. 72.
2. A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 147.

Several chapters in Erewhon are devoted to religion; not unexpectedly, for Butler was all his life deeply interested in questions of faith. Malcolm Muggeridge who calls his not very scholarly study of Butler The Earnest Atheist, has, I think not realised that what Butler is suspicious of is not religion as such but the type of hypocrisy and sham that is often mixed up with organised religion. If one reads the Note-Books at all carefully, it is hard to see how, in any meaning of the word, Butler could be called an atheist. I have chosen one entry as an illustration: "To know God better is only to realise more fully how impossible it is that we should ever know him at all. I cannot tell which is the more childish - to deny him, or to attempt to define him."¹ Another example is In Memoriam, one of Butler's few poems, written in 1895 to his young Swiss friend Hans Faesch as he set out on a journey to China, from which Butler did not expect him to return. It is a very emotional poem, ending with the lines:

So take him into thy holy keeping, O Lord,

And guide him and guard him ever, and fare him well!

The chapters on religion in Erewhon are as complex as their author. There is a kind of double satire: a certain type/

1. The Note-Books of Samuel Butler, p. 326.

type of religious zeal is gently satirised in young Higgs, who believes the Erewhonians are the lost tribes of Israel and dreams of converting them to Christianity. When Arowhena tells him that his God was "man's way of expressing his sense of the Divine" and that it was unworthy to regard him as personal, Higgs points out to her "that we had books whose genuineness was beyond all possibility of doubt, as they were certainly none of them less than 1800 years old; that in these there were the most authentic accounts of men who had been spoken to by the Deity Himself ---"¹

Then there is the satire involved in the light that Erewhonian religious conceptions throw on our own. This is especially well brought out in the chapter on the Musical Banks - Higgs has begun to realise that there are two distinct currencies in Erewhon, each controlled by its own system of banks. The Musical Banks were supposed to issue the currency for all financial transactions, but in fact their money had no practical value at all. One day Higgs is allowed to accompany his hostess to one of these severely beautiful buildings, and afterwards she explains to him that he must not think that people have lost faith in them, even though so few deal with them." --- the/

1. Samuel Butler, Erewhon, pp. 104-105.

"---the heart of the country was thoroughly devoted to these establishments, and any sign of their being in danger would bring in support from the most unexpected quarters. It was only because people knew them to be so very safe, that in some cases they felt that their support was unnecessary.

---Having made these last admissions, she returned to her original statement, namely, that every one in the country really supported these banks."¹ When Butler treats the unofficial religion of Erewhon it is hard to tell how serious he is, for here his attitude is rather ambivalent.

"Ydgrun" certainly occupied a very anomalous position; she was held to be both omnipresent and omnipotent, but she was not an elevated conception, and was sometimes both cruel and absurd. Even her most devoted worshippers were a little ashamed of her, and served her more with heart and indeed than with their tongues. --- Take her in all, however, she was a beneficent and useful deity, who did not care how much she was denied so long as she was obeyed and feared, and who kept hundreds of thousands in those paths which make life tolerably happy, who would never have been kept there otherwise, and over whom a higher and more spiritual ideal would have had no power."² And he continues: "Taking then their religious opinions as

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1. Samuel Butler, Erewhon, p. 93.
2. do. do. p. 106.

a whole, I must own that the Erewhonians are superstitious, on account of the views which they hold of their professed god, and their entirely anomalous and inexplicable worship of Ydgrun, a worship at once the most powerful, yet most devoid of formalism, that I ever met with; but in practice things worked better than might have been expected, and the conflicting claims of Ydgrun and the gods were arranged by unwritten compromises (for the most part in Ydgrun's favour) which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred were very well understood."¹

More light is thrown on Butler's conception of religion in Erewhon Revisited, where he shows how a religion comes into being. Higgs left Erewhon in a balloon and this "miracle" had become the basis of a new religion, Sunchildism. When Higgs returns he finds a new faith and a new church, with himself set up as a God. Chapter XV contains some of the Sunchild's Sayings, to which Higgs listens as they are read out in church; though he cannot remember having said any of them except the last verse.¹ He is horrified at finding relics and testimonies, glosses and "conjectural emendations" different interpretations etc. But here too the satire is directed against organised religion./

1. Samuel Butler, Erewhon Revisited, p. 306.

religion. "--- the parallelism between Sunchildism and Christianity, between the Erewhonian and the Anglican Churches, between the institutions and types with which Higgs came into contact and those with which Butler had struggled all his life is sufficiently obvious."¹ And it is very likely that Higgs's words to his son express Butler's own feelings; you want a heart to check your head, and a head to check your heart." -- Those who are at the head of science provide us with the one party; those whom we call our churchmen are the other. Both are corrupt, but we can spare neither, for each checks as far as it can the corruptions of the other." - 'Then you would have us uphold Sunchildism, knowing it to be untrue?' - 'Do what you will, you will not get perfect truth. And if you can follow the lead that I believe Dr. Downie will give you, that is to say, get rid of cock-and-bull stories, idealize my unworthy self, and, as I said last night, make me a peg on which to hang your own best thoughts - Sunchildism will be as near truth as anything you are likely to get.'²

In 1901, when Butler published Erewhon Revisited,
he/

1. C. Stillman, Samuel Butler, A Mid-Victorian Modern, p. 290.
2. Samuel Butler, Erewhon Revisited, p. 362.

he was asked to revise a new edition of Erewhon. For reasons of copy-right he had to make substantial alterations, and he added two chapters, Concerning the Rights of Animals and The Rights of Vegetables. In the preface Butler says that he wrote them because he was obliged to - he would have preferred to cut out "some forty or fifty pages from the latter part of the book." They are not at all remarkable - their main interest is, I think, that they show how little Butler had changed in the thirty years since Erewhon was first published. The satire is of the familiar type - pursuing a line of argument with a relentless sense of logic, until it is clear to everybody, how absurd the whole thing is.

Owing to the preachings of a prophet of theirs, the Erewhonians had been persuaded to be vegetarians, as it was wrong to kill an animal for the sake of eating it. For several hundred years they suffered, and then there appeared a philosopher who proved that vegetables are our fellow-creatures just as much as animals are, and as they are living beings, their lives ought to be sanctified too. But as it had been legal to eat animals who had died a natural death - and natural deaths among animals had increased enormously! - it was to be lawful to eat rotting fruit and yellow cabbage-leaves and the like.

Having/

Having thus driven his fellow-countrymen into a corner he suggested that the question should be settled by an oracle, to whom the Erewhonians turned in times of trouble. The outcome was that common sense prevailed. "Even the Puritans, after a vain attempt to subsist on a kind of jam made of apples and yellow-cabbage-leaves, succumbed to the inevitable and resigned themselves to a diet of roast beef and mutton, with all the normal adjuncts of a modern dinner-table."¹

When one tries to sum up Erewhon, one finds that utopian and satirical threads form a unique pattern. Butler uses the traditional utopian form without adding anything to the old pattern of the traveller who finds himself in an unknown land. To that part of the book Butler could give the freshness that comes only from personal experience. However, once he has made Higgs cross the mountain range into Erewhon, there is the same lack of characterization as one finds in most other utopias. The plot is very thin; only just enough to keep the story going: Higgs falls in love with the daughter of the family where he is staying, and in the end he escapes with her in a balloon. People are not important, but ideas are - in this respect Butler is well within the utopian tradition. But/

But if the people are uninteresting, the ideas are not; they convey a very personal outlook and show Butler's pre-occupations, likes and dislikes. As I have pointed out in the passages on machinery, sometimes what is omitted - social and political aspects for example - is more revealing than what has been dealt with. For Butler refused to be anything but himself; he was not really concerned with his contemporaries. He wrote to please himself - and possibly posterity. Perhaps this is the reason why Erewhon has a timeless quality. What also contributes to this effect is the brilliant style: to a foreigner at least, Butler's language is vigorous and matter-of-fact, a perfect vehicle for his ideas. The satire with its subtle and ambiguous implications, may be obscure sometimes, but never the language. Part of the appeal of Erewhon is that one can never be quite sure that one has seen all that Butler put there for one to see, whereas most writers of utopias are much too fond of underlining and explaining every point they wish to make.

CHAPTER II.

If comparatively few traces of contemporary social and political problems can be found in utopian fiction before the 1870's, a noticeable change takes place in the 1880's. I.F. Clarke has summed up what he considers the revelant reasons in the following way: "The great central period of prosperity and of certainty in unending progress was coming to an end; and the last decades of the Victorian epoch are marked by doubts and anxieties born of far-reaching changes in religion, economics, and politics. The results are felt throughout the utopias of the period. The rise of industrial opponents in America and Germany, the way the steamship and the telegraph were reducing the size of the world, the spread of industrialism, the growing urbanization of a once agricultural society, and the rise of a literate working class were all facts that posed difficult questions for the future. The answers were supplied in the ideal commonwealths, for in spite of their often fundamental differences they all agree that there is a problem to be solved."¹ Although one misses names like Comte and Darwin, this passage points out a fact: the authors are closer/

1. I.F. Clarke, The Nineteenth - Century Utopia, The Quarterly Review, Jan. 1958, p. 82.

closer to contemporary society in most of the utopias after 1880, more aware of its problems and needs.

In 1881, W.D. Hay published a utopia, Three Hundred Years Hence, by no means a master-piece but an illuminating combination of current ideas and personal idiosyncrasies. Hay must have been familiar with Reade's Martyrdom of Man, so striking are the similarities.

The literary frame-work is scanty enough: a series of lectures on the period 1880-2180, given by a professor to his students. To make history a little brighter for them, certain aspects are treated in detail, by comparisons between their world and that of the barbaric age of 300 years ago. The beginning of progress was a Socialist "revolution": "So, without a crash, without a struggle, without bloodshed, assassination, intrigue or revolt, the thrones of Europe and all their cumbrous furniture, all their barbaric glory, all their pomp and pride and weight of government that had been built upon the necks of the people and cemented with their blood through dark ages of the past, were engulfed at once in overthrow and oblivion, while over them there rolled the irresistible wave of Freedom, Brotherhood, and Progress!"¹

The new socialist world settles down to a Century of Peace/

1. W.D. Hay, Three Hundred Years Hence, p. 75.

Peace (the 20th), and Science performs prodigies that the 1880's never thought of. As Mr Hay regarded birth-control as a most wicked notion, the enormously increased population has spread all over the globe and begins to settle in the interior of the earth, like Lord Lytton's Coming Race. Even the bottom of the sea is made inhabitable, with the help of the "Basilic Force," a strange medium reminiscent of "Vril." A short painful interlude in the peaceful progress is the extinction of "a thousand millions" of Chinese and negroes who have made themselves a nuisance to the superior race. "People who until then had prated - as they did in your day¹ - of the 'Rights' of the Chinamen, and who had never perceived that such rights must be of naught when they clashed with the predominant requirements of the Highest Race, were silent now."²

The attitude to women is very Victorian. Although "her mental faculties are plainly more circumscribed", she has "always been thought of as the White Man's mate, subordinate to him, but practically a being equal to himself."³ Nevertheless - a tribute indeed to Queen Victoria - the nominal head of all government is "Her Most Adorable Majesty, the Empress of the Earth, and Sovereign of the Human/

1. The students have been asked to try and imagine themselves as living in the 1880's.
2. W.D. Hay, Three Hundred Years Hence, p. 243.
3. do. do. p. 337.

Human Race." One of the quainter notions in this book is the election every ten years of a new Majesty, chosen from a number of competitors who are all called "Queens of Beauty."

Socialism, though never worked out in detail, links this utopia with Morris, but its optimistic creed with Winwood Reade: "Yet, our study of the past has taught us this much: that, however high Mankind may have reached at any one period, the condition of it is always capable of immeasurable and indefinite advance. Perhaps, some future age will look back upon us now, with all the pitying interest and almost contempt that it is our habit to infuse into our considerations of three hundred years ago. Who can tell the measureless superiority, the mighty exaltation, that may be reserved for our posterity!"¹

The glorious future of man on this planet is not enough: "Man, through the greater Force of Reason with which he is endowed gains greater and yet wider dominion over the agencies of Nature, surely he shall cause his Reason to penetrate across the field of aether. We, too, cannot find limit to the powers within us, as they grow and strengthen through the years; shall we dare to deny that Science may yet point the pathway to the planets!"²

It/

1. W.D. Hay, Three Hundred Years Hence, p. 352.
2. do. do. do. p. 356.

It is probably more than a coincidence that the three most interesting utopian writers in the 1880's were naturalists, more or less. W.D. Hay wrote a book on English fungi (incidentally the vast population of the earth three hundred years hence all had to sit down to meals prepared from fungi!). His utopian world, however, is decidedly urban, though smokeless and clean, and also rather over-populated. His aversion to great cities seems to have been moral rather than anything else. A striking example of this attitude is to be found in his The Doom of a Great City, published in 1880. If it had not shown some interesting similarities to Richard Jefferies After London, I should not have mentioned it, for it is hardly a utopia, strictly speaking. The emphasis is on the doom; and the new and better state of things after the catastrophe is only hinted at - apparently a kind of rural and agricultural society. The book is supposed to be written in 1942 by one of the survivors from the calamity 60 years earlier, to his grand-children, scattered all over "Australasia." London is described as a depressing place, and "it was the opinion I formed at the time, and the opinion I still continue to hold, that London was foul and rotten to the core, and steeped in sin of every imaginable variety."¹ What kills everybody in London/

1. W.D. Hay, The Doom of a Great City, p. 9-10.

London and subsequently drives people out of England is a deadly fog that chokes its victims. When the narrator ventures into the dead city to look for his mother and sister, he finds it "the very heart and home of Horror itself." Descriptions of dead bodies fill a great many pages but at last the author is ready to exclaim: "O London! surely, great and manifold as were thy wickednesses, thy crimes, thy faults, who stayed to think of these in the hour of thy awful doom, who dared at that terrible moment to say thy sentence was deserved?"¹

If W.D. Hay is not seriously concerned with the rapid growth of towns and the menace to rural England, this is the main problem for naturalists like Hudson and Jefferies. For not only were they lovers of nature - W.H. Hudson was, among other things, a well known ornithologist; and Richard Jefferies was an expert on rural conditions, and author of The Life of the Fields - but they also belonged to the first generation that was faced with life in really large towns, without easy access to unspoilt countryside. Like William Morris they both reacted strongly against the seamy side of industrialism and the appalling growth of ugliness, but there similarities end. Compared with Morris they are much/

1. W.D. Hay, The Doom of a Great City, p. 44.

much more single-minded. They are concerned with Nature; man is not incorporated, so to speak. Hudson, who is much the gentler of the two, transfigures him into an unearthly, romantic being, whereas Jefferies makes him into a semi-savage. One is indeed very far from Reade's demigods! I would call both Jefferies After London, published in 1885, and Hudson's A Crystal Age, 1887, "Back - to - Nature" utopias because their authors consciously repudiate science and technology.

Of the two, Hudson's is the better known and also the better book. A. L. Morton says of it: "The most striking thing, perhaps, about A Crystal Age is its complete lack of relation to anything in the existing world, except by antipathy. It is a new creation, so remote from us in time and feeling that the very memory of any kind of society now existing has been entirely lost."¹ This is only partly true, but it shows very clearly the gulf between an urbanised man like Mr. Morton and a naturalist like W.H. Hudson. "The existing world" for Morton is society; for Hudson it is the earth, and the life of the earth.

When the sleeper wakes up in a green forest he finds himself in a flowering wilderness. All knowledge of the old world has gone - Hudson gets over the trouble of explaining/

1. A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 159.

explaining how by hinting at "a sort of mighty Savonarola bonfire, in which most of the things once valued have been consumed to ashes - politics, religions, systems of philosophy, isms and ologies of all descriptions."¹ Society does not exist any more - only a few scattered "Houses," each under a Father and a Mother. Money is unknown; life is arcadian, and simple. Although the stranger is considered very coarse in speech and manners, he feels comparatively happy and tries to adjust himself to this strange new world, as he thinks it contrasts favourably with the old. He remembers the thoughts that used to haunt him: "A little while, the thought said, and all this will be no more; for we have not found the secret of happiness, and all our toil and effort is misdirected; and those who are seeking for a mechanical equivalent of consciousness, and those who are going about doing good, are alike wasting their lives; and on all our hopes, beliefs, dreams, theories, and enthusiasms, 'Passing Away' is written plainly, as the Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin, seen by Belshazzar on the wall of his palace in Babylon.

That withering thought never comes to me now.

'Passing Away' is not written on the earth, which is still God's/

1. W.H. Hudson, A Crystal Age, p. 294.

God's green footstool; the grass was not greener nor the flowers sweeter when man was first made out of clay, and the breath of life breathed into his nostrils. And the human family and race - outcome of all that dead, unimaginable past - this also appears to have the stamp of everlastingness on it; and in its tranquil power and majesty resembles some vast mountain that lifts its head above the clouds, and has its granite roots deep down in the world's centre. A feeling of awe is in me when I gaze on it; but it is vain to ask myself now whether the vanished past, with its manifold troubles and transitory delights, was preferable to this unchanging peaceful present."¹ For the cool peace of mind of the new world has its price: no memories of the past, lack of passions, lack of sexual instincts. The contrast between two different ways of life is underlined by the love the stranger feels for Yoletta, a lovely young girl. At last he realises the truth: "Now I possessed the secret of that passionless, everlasting calm of beings, who had for ever outlived, and left as immeasurably far behind as the instincts of the wolf and ape, the strongest emotion of which my heart was capable."² Whether Hudson thought this/

1. W.H. Hudson, A Crystal Age, p. 295 -96.

2. do. do. p. 302.

this was too high a price to be paid for serene calm is not quite clear from his book - in any case the stranger pays with his life, for he drinks a poison that promises him peace. It is a proof of the author's skill that the awkward arrangement whereby the narrator describes his own death does not seem utterly absurd. But as the atmosphere is romantic and nostalgic, the death motif being introduced in a way reminiscent of Herbert Read's The Green Child, verisimilitude does not seem very important in this escapist utopia of the eighties.

If gentleness is the essence of Hudson's A Crystal Age, Jefferies' rejection of his own age is much more violent. In After London he combines love of nature with hate of man-made things to a degree that makes one suspect him of hating mankind itself.¹ His conception of nature, too, is less gentle than Hudson's; his world of forests and lakes less Arcadian. Unlike Hudson, who was born in Brazil and never specifies in what part of the world his sleeper awakes, Jefferies chooses England as a setting.

The/

1. Most critics seem to couple Jefferies and Hudson without noticing the difference between them; so for instance I.F. Clarke, who repeatedly writes of "the romantic Arcadias of Jefferies and Hudson." See The Quarterly Review, Jan. 1958, pp. 83, 86, 87.

The first part of the book is aptly called The Relapse into Barbarism, and there is a curious undertone of satisfaction in the opening lines: "The old men say their fathers told them that soon after the fields were left to themselves a change began to be visible. It became green everywhere in the first spring, after London ended, so that all the country looked alike."¹ Why London ended is never explained, nor why so much of the land should be lakes and swamps. The country is inhabited by tribes, all quarelling with one another, living in "towns", with free men and slaves. As they are "ignorant, rude, and unlettered," civilization is set back to the earlier Middle Ages as far as material things go, but without any of their glory. Much interest is given to detailed descriptions of tools, arms, houses, clothes, etc. This is one example: "Upon a low table by the bedstead was a flint and steel and tinder, and an earthenware oil lamp, not intended to be carried about. There, too, lay his knife, with buckhorn hilt, worn by everyone in the belt"² - and so on for about twelve pages.

The second part of the book, Wild England, is more narrative. The hero, Felix, wants to marry a girl whose father does not approve of the match, so like a mediaeval knight /

1. R. Jefferies, After London, p. 1.
 2. do. do. do. p. 89.

knight Felix sets out to distinguish himself. As Jefferies never finished the book the end must be guessed at: Felix presumably becomes king of the shepherds on the shores of the Great Lake, and the state of eternal warfare among the half-wild tribes comes to an end.

The detailed description of how Felix ventures into what once was London is very revealing. Here Jefferies loathing of all that it represented is given vent to: "He had penetrated into the midst of that dreadful place, of which he had heard many a tradition: how the earth was poison, the water poison, the air poison, the very light of heaven, falling through such an atmosphere, poison. There were said to be places where the earth was on fire and belched forth sulphurous fumes, supposed to be from the combustion of the enormous stores of strange and unknown chemicals collected by the wonderful people of those times. Upon the surface of the water there was a greenish-yellow oil, to touch which was death to any creature; it was the very essence of corruption. --- The earth on which he walked, the black earth, leaving phosphoric footmarks behind him, was composed of the mouldered bodies of millions of men who had passed away in the centuries during which the city existed. He shuddered/

shuddered as he moved; he hastened, yet could not go fast, his numbed limbs would not permit him."¹ In these pages, as well as in W.D. Hay's descriptions of the corpse-strewn streets of London in The Doom of a Great City, is the same kind of gloating that can almost be called morbid, especially when it is compared with John Collier's description of a barbaric England in 1995, where the fate of London is only referred to in passing: "Sixty odd years ago, before London had become a catacomb, ----"²

When one looks back at the utopias of the 1880's one is confronted on the one hand by the boundless optimism and faith in the fantastic possibilities of science, represented by W.D. Hay, and on the other by the lack of enthusiasm before these very possibilities that the "back - to - nature" utopias imply. The former were to survive well into the 1930's, though severely shaken by the First World War, but as far as I know there is no equivalent of the attitude of Hudson and Jefferies. What characterizes both these attitudes is the cutting away from contemporary society as it actually exists, a refusal to believe that an ideal commonwealth could be built/

1. R. Jefferies, After London, p. 378-80.
2. J. Collier, Tom's A'Cold, p. 39.

built with existing material. Even the satire of this period shows this peculiarity: Arthur Brookfield's Simiocracy, 1884, has the same flavour. It is surprising that Liberalism rather than Socialism should be chosen, but Mr. Brookfield seems unaware of the possibility of political power for anything but Conservatives or Liberals. When all reforms have been carried through the Liberal Prime Minister finds himself idle, and so the Game Act of 1905 becomes a fact. It abolishes fox-hunting and pheasant-shooting and leads up to the proclamation that reminds one of Orwell's Animal Farm: "While declaring - we believe, for the first time in the history of legislation - that all animals were in a certain sense equal, it expressly asserted the claim of some of the more intelligent to be treated with special consideration."¹ Then Borneo apes gradually conquer England; and, in case the point of the story should have been missed, the book ends with the "Simian Proclamation: They (the English nation) might have known by their own experience that the crude, impulsive pranks of a Democracy may lead to fully as much national discomfort and misfortune as the personal vagaries of any one monarch."²

1. A. Brookfield, Simiocracy, p. 56.
2. do. do. do. p. 182.

CHAPTER III.

To go from the utopias of the 80's, in which total acceptance or total rejection of scientific and technical progress was the keystone, to William Morris's News from Nowhere, published in 1890, means moving into another type of utopian world. Whereas the others stressed one aspect only, Morris is much more aware of the complexity of life in an industrial age. Like Hudson and Jefferies he hated the appalling ugliness of industrial towns, but he did not consider nature more important than man. He thought of man as primarily a social being who could only be happy in creative work shared with others, but he hated "modern society," for reasons that will be dealt with fully later.

In order to realise the unique qualities of Morris's utopia, it is necessary to see it not only as a document that shows the beliefs and faiths of a certain period, but also as a personal document. In fact, the personal element is very strong in Morris, and one is justified in stressing it. For when Morris wrote an article on Bellamy's Looking Backward for The Commonwealth he pointed out that "the only safe way of reading a utopia is to consider/

consider it as an expression of the temperament of the author."¹

There is nothing in Morris's background to explain his subsequent career. He belonged to the wealthy Victorian middle classes and had the typical education: public school and Oxford. Like Butler he had meant to take Holy Orders but did not: instead he wanted to be an architect. What he did become has been summed up in four words: "poet, artist, manufacturer, and socialist."

Before endeavouring to analyse his utopia one must try to find the answer to a few questions that are important for the understanding of his work. The most important is the one that puzzled his contemporaries: what made Morris a socialist? He has answered it himself in his essay How I became a Socialist. "---the study of history and the love and practice of art forced me into a hatred of the civilization which, if things were to stop as they are, would turn history into inconsequent nonsense, and make art a collection of the curiosities of the past, which would have no serious relation to the life of the present."² Professor Mackail does not quite accept Morris's own statement, but as he himself points out that there are no other documents to show "the steps by/

1. Quoted by E.P. Thompson, William Morris, p. 803.

2. William Morris, ed. G.D.H. Cole, p. 658.

by which he became a convinced Socialist and the main influences - whether men or events or books - that seem to shape his course at this time,"¹ one is thrown back on Morris's essay which seems reliable enough.

If one goes back to Morris's Oxford days one can, however, find certain men and books that influenced him deeply; for at Oxford he came into contact with men who knew life in the industrial areas and were conscious of the necessity of raising the standard of living among the working classes, and there he also read Carlyle and Ruskin. Professor Mackail only mentions the former in passing; but according to E.P. Thompson Morris read Carlyle's Past and Present while he was at Oxford,² and there are striking similarities between the way in which Carlyle uses his mediaeval chronicle to give a picture of life in St. Edmundsbury Monastery, and the way in which Morris was to use Froissart's account of John Ball in his semi-utopian work A Dream of John Ball: they both point a moral. But in Carlyle there was more than a love of the Middle Ages to attract Morris; there was criticism of the present day and, above all, the gospel of work, the nobleness of all work.

When Morris states his reasons for becoming a Socialist, one/

1. T.W. Mackail, The Life of William Morris, II, p. 79.

2. E.P. Thompson, William Morris, p. 59.

one is struck by his omitting Socialist writings. After all, Marx and Engels lived and published their works in England. But "---when I took this step (joining the Democratic Federation in 1883) I was blankly ignorant of economics; I had never so much as opened Adam Smith, or heard of Ricardo, or of Karl Marx,"¹ and he continues: "I put some conscience into trying to learn the economical side of Socialism and even tackled Marx, though I suffered agonies of confusion of the brain over reading the economics of that work."¹ The intricacies of Marxist doctrines bored him, but that does not mean that there was anything hazy and romantic about his Socialism. It is true that Morris felt the awkwardness of being a rich Communist, and in his love for his beautiful home at Kelmscott and the lovely things he produced at his firm there was always an element of guilt, because they could not be shared by all. But it is not an accident that the phrases "practical Socialist" and "practical Socialism" appear four times in this short essay, for they were important. Morris was an active Socialist, talking at open-air meetings, working hard for the Democratic Federation and other Socialist bodies; never sparing his efforts or his money.

Later critics, like A.L. Morton and E.P. Thompson, have/

1. William Morris, ed. G.D.H. Cole, pp. 655-656.

have tried to make Morris a Marxist, a task that needs plenty of faith. For though Morris himself defined his socialism as Communism, he was far from dogmatic; he was, in his own words, "a man, ---- careless of metaphysics and religion, as well as of scientific analysis, but with a deep love of the earth and the life on it, and a passion for the history of the past of mankind."¹ He was, in short, "a practical Socialist," not a doctrinaire.

There is, however, no doubt that News from Nowhere should be regarded as a Socialist utopia. It was written for The Commonweal and appeared there in instalments in 1890. It depicts a frankly Socialist, even Communist structure of society; classless, of perfect equality, where all privilege has been swept away by a revolution. There is no government, money has been abolished, education is not compulsory and decidedly anti-intellectual, Christianity had been superseded by "a religion of humanity," and the most important thing of all is freedom.

Some writers of utopias, W.D. Hay for instance or later H.G. Wells, have let the new order of things come about slowly and by general agreement, but Morris emphasizes the Revolution, a fact that endears him to Marxist/

1. William Morris, ed. G.D.H. Cole, p. 658.

Marxist critics. "Tell me one thing, if you can," said I. "Did the change, the 'revolution' it used to be called, come peacefully?" "Peacefully?" said he, "what peace was there amongst those poor confused wretches of the nineteenth¹ century? It was war from beginning to end; bitter war, till hope and pleasure put an end to it."² A.L. Morton thinks that "as a whole it convinces as no other imaginary account of a revolution does, and I think the total success comes largely from the way in which Morris used his experiences in the actual movement, just as the occasional false notes reflect the weakness and immaturity of that movement."³ Perhaps Mr. Morton stresses the importance of daily work for the Cause at the expense of the visionary and imaginative elements in Morris - the account of the Revolution reads like a story told by an eye-witness, an effect which could hardly have been due only to "the careful way in which he had studied socialism as the science of the class struggle."⁴

It has been pointed out that in News from Nowhere all men/

1. A slip of the pen, for Morris did not put his revolution earlier than 1952; but one of these revealing slips, for Morris was actually thinking of his own time more than of the future.
2. W. Morris, News from Nowhere, p. 143.
3. A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 169.
4. A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 169.

men are equal, not only because money has been abolished but also because no man has any authority over his neighbour.¹ Nor has a man the right to stop his wife, if she wants to leave him, or vice versa. In 1908 the possibility of divorce was still so shocking that Morris was accused of promiscuity - "this cancer in the throat of socialism - this curse of a petty and ludicrously superficial trifling with complex sex-matters, which provides the enemies of progress with a weapon forged in the strongest fire of human nature."² However, one does not often see Morris dealt with as an advocate of loose morals. Most critics of News from Nowhere have succumbed to its sunny friendly atmosphere and its absence of petty rules, and have agreed, however different they may be, that this is indeed a utopia where they would find it possible to live.

Another strong element in Morris's utopianism was his love for the Middle Ages. Even as a child he had felt drawn to this period, and when he came to Oxford, he was influenced both by the mediaeval buildings and by the romantic poets he read. E.P. Thompson drew attention to an important new factor in the romantic cult of/

1. Marie Louise Berneri, Journey through Utopia, p. 258.
2. Alfred Noyes, William Morris, p. 134.

of mediaevalism. "Increased scholarship added daily to the knowledge of mediaeval times. For Morris, the most important result of the new scholarship was in the reconstruction of a picture of the Middle Ages, neither as a grotesque nor as a faery world, but as a real community of human beings - an organic pre-capitalist community with values and an art of its own, sharply contrasted with those of Victorian England. --- In this reconstructed world Morris found a place, not to which he could retreat, but in which he could stand and look upon his own age with the eyes of a stranger or visitor, judging his own time by standards other than its own."¹

In Carlyle's Past and Present Morris had met horror at the impersonal, inhuman relations between workmen and employers; and the different values of the Middle Ages had there been underlined. "Gurth, born thrall of Cedric, it is like, got cuffs as often as pork-parings, if he misdemeaned himself; but Gurth did belong to Cedric: no human creature then went about connected with nobody, left to go his own way into Bastilles or worse, under Laissez-faire."² And in Ruskin he had met "the Master", to whom he was thankful all his life and whose chapter on "The Nature of Gothic" he reprinted at the Kelmscott/

1. E.P. Thompson, William Morris, p. 59.

2. Th. Carlyle, Past and Present, p. 245.

Kelmscott Press in 1892, as homage to a man whose work had been a continual stimulus. Like Carlyle, Ruskin looked back to the Middle Ages, because art, to him the supreme thing in life, was then important, and common men took pleasure in producing works of art. They created - they did not imitate, and their work was an expression of their faith." --- There might be more freedom in England, though her feudal lord's lightest word were worth men's lives, and though the blood of the vexed husbandman dropped in the furrows of her fields, than there is while the animation of her multitude is sent like fuel to feed the factory smoke, and the strength of them is given daily to be wasted in the fineness of a web, or racked into the exactness of a line."¹

News from Nowhere is full of references to the Middle Ages: "More akin to our way of looking at life was the spirit of the Middle Ages," says old Hammond to William Guest, and: "Like the mediaevals we like everything trim, and clean, and orderly, and bright." It is also full of examples of Morris's extraordinary power of visualising things; houses, tools, clothes all add to the mediaeval touch. Typical is this description of Dick, the waterman,/

1. J. Ruskin, The Stoness of Venice, II, p. 148-49.

waterman, who acts as William Guest's guide: "His dress was not like any modern work-a-day clothes I had seen, but would have served very well as a costume for a picture of fourteenth-century life: it was of dark blue cloth, simple enough, but of fine web, and without a stain on it. He had a brown leather belt round his waist, and I noticed that its clasp was of damascened steel beautifully wrought." This interest in mediaeval dress is even more pronounced in A Dream of John Ball. It was Morris's misfortune to live in an age when architecture, furniture, interior decoration, and clothes were shockingly ugly; and it is against that background one must see the Lincoln green, the hand wrought silver belts, and the 14th century architecture that abound in News from Nowhere. But one must not forget the lovely pictures of rural England, London transformed into a garden city, "small, white, and clean," and the Thames Valley restored to its former beauty. They all show Morris's visual genius, and his skill in making others see what he saw in his imagination. The leisurely boat-trip up the Thames and the hay-making at Kelmscott read like chapters out of some Arcadian novel.

Hatred of ugliness and emphasis on beauty are, as might be expected in an artist's utopia, very noticeable in News from Nowhere. It is an attitude that is rarer than one/

one might think, for although all utopian writers - except of course the "anti-utopians" - point out that in their brave new worlds everything is not only well managed but also beautiful, yet one does not get the impression that beauty matters very much. Robert Blatchford's The Sorcery Shop, so like Morris's News from Nowhere, is perhaps an exception. But in other utopias one finds a very utilitarian conception of beauty, whereas Morris's is permeated with it. He is sensitive to beauty of landscape, of men and women, of everything used and produced.

The important thing about Morris's love of the Middle Ages, however, is not his artistic pleasure in beauty but the different attitude to work he thought he had found. "Work" in this case includes the relations between a man and his work and between workman and employer. As can be seen from the quotations from Carlyle and Ruskin, Morris was influenced by them. Like Carlyle he stressed the dignity of all work, and like Ruskin he emphasized the pleasure of creative work. But, unlike them both, he was an artist and a craftsman who took immense delight in mastering the details of new crafts, and he was restless and unhappy if he could not work with his hands. He knew, from personal experience, what Ruskin had hinted at; the danger/

danger of making one man work with his hands and another with his brain, and therefore he built a world in which "morbid thinkers, and miserable workers"¹ could not exist - there a harmonious balance had been struck. Wherever William Guest goes, he meets friendly people who are working happily together, and when he mentions this to old Hammond as a surprising fact he gets the following answer: "--- there is a kind of fear growing up amongst us that we shall one day be short of work. It is a pleasure which we are afraid of losing, not a pain." - "Yes," said I, "I have noticed that also. But in the meantime, what do you positively mean to assert about the pleasurable-ness of work among you?" - "This, that all work is now pleasurable; either because of the hope of gain in honour and wealth² with which the work is done, which causes pleasurable excitement, even when the actual work is not pleasant; or else because it has grown into a pleasurable habit, as in the case with what you may call mechanical work; and lastly (and most of our work is of this kind) because there is a conscious, sensuous pleasure in the work/

1. J. Ruskin, The Stories of Venice, II, p. 155.

2. What Morris could have meant by "wealth" in a society like that of News from Nowhere is not clear.

work itself; it is done, that is, by artists."¹

Morris's views on work have not always been understood by his critics, probably because we are still suffering from a too narrowly intellectual education; and unless a person has a strong creative instinct, he is not likely to recognize this urge in others. Far too often discussion of this problem has degenerated into a squabble about Morris's views on machinery. For Marxist critics it is vitally important to prove that what Morris objected to was not machinery as such but Capitalist misuse of machinery, and in a world where Capitalism had been abolished, it would be perfectly all right to use machinery.² However, if one reads without bias the often quoted passage on machinery in News from Nowhere, there emerges above all Morris's hatred of shoddy and unnecessary mass-production: "So that whatever is made is good, and thoroughly fit for its purpose. Nothing can be made except for genuine use; therefore no inferior goods are made. Moreover, as afore-said/

1. W. Morris, News from Nowhere, p. 127. This passage is almost echoed in Robert Blatchford's The Sorcery Shop, pp. 61-62: "You must understand that with these people work is a pleasure, not a task. And in all the higher arts and crafts the men get so interested in the work, and so enamoured of it, that it is not easy to drive them away from it. --- Remember, this is a nation of craftsmen, and artists, and musicians."
2. See A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, pp. 166-169 and E.P. Thompson, William Morris, pp. 745-760.

aforesaid, we have now found out what we want so we make no more than we want; and as we are not driven to make a vast quantity of useless things, we have time and resources enough to consider our pleasure in making them. All work which would be irksome to do by hand is done by immensely improved machinery; and in all work which it is a pleasure to do by hand machinery is done without. There is no difficulty in finding work which suits the special turn of mind of everybody; so that no man is sacrificed to the wants of another. From time to time, when we have found out that some piece of work was too disagreeable or troublesome, we have given it up and done altogether without the thing produced by it."¹

There is one aspect of Morris's attitude to work that is always neglected. Besides being an artist and a craftsman he was probably a shrewder man of business than has been suspected. The actual management of his firm did not interest him, but it was by no means unfamiliar to him. One must not think it was a rich man's whim only - it became a paying concern in the end; even the beautifully printed books he produced at the Kelmscott Press were profitable financially. Much of the quiet assurance underlying his dream of the future can probably be traced back/

1. W. Morris, News from Nowhere, p. 134.

back to the fact that he himself had proved that goods could be produced that way, even in an industrialized society - and at a profit!

This unusual mixture of the dreamer and the practical man is one of the things that give News from Nowhere its unique atmosphere. For this happy new world is related to Victorian England, does, in fact, grow out of it almost organically. Morris tries to show, over and over again, that his dream world has roots in the past - is England as it could be. The very number of place-names and descriptions of familiar country-side (with a few eye-sores gone!) underlines its Englishness.

But this sunny, friendly, happy world has its shadow, and this note of sadness is introduced now and then throughout the book: William "Guest", the visitor from another age, is an outsider. He is accepted as a guest, but the difference between him and the dream-world is always present in the reader's mind - and in those of the people he meets. There is a barrier between them and him, and a kind of double perspective is created that gives the book an added interest. William Morris liked the dream-motif and used it often, as in Lindenberg Pool and A Dream of John Ball, but he has never been more successful than in News from Nowhere. He has himself commented on the clearness and/
and/

and vividness of his dreams.¹ It is very different from Hudson's sleeper and the deliberate vagueness of his world. "I do not quite know how it happened, my recollection of the whole matter being in a somewhat clouded condition ---" are the opening lines of the earlier book. And whereas Hudson's hero at last attains the deeper sleep, death, Morris's dreamer wakes up to struggle for a new world. But for this underlying tension, Morris's hatred of modern society - a hatred that was strong enough for him to let a revolution sweep away the evils of capitalism and industrialism - his vision might have been too sweet and sunny. But Morris was both a destroyer of what he hated and a crusader for a new world; not a negative machine-breaker but a man full of hopes for the future. Into News from Nowhere Morris put all his faith in "the new day of fellowship, and rest, and happiness," and so has the right to call it "a vision rather than a dream."

News from Nowhere makes everything else written at that period seem rather insignificant, but there is one other work, Alexander Craig's Ionia, that I would like to mention briefly. It was published in Chicago in 1898, but has an English setting, where it is not purely utopian. What makes it interesting is the fact that it contains the first ironical criticism of optimistic evolutionism that found/

1. William Morris, ed. G.D.H. Cole, p. 198.

found its way into utopian fiction. As Alexander Craig does not seem to have possessed a very subtle mind, this attitude was probably fairly common then. His young hero, Alexander Musgrave, reacts against sentences like these: "When we look backward over the history of mankind, we find the condition of the world steadily improving. From epoch to epoch there is observed a constant upward tendency; there may be retrogression but each step forward is always in advance of the last. --- Evolution has educed civilization from the savage state. Evolution will improve that civilization until the future inhabitants of this world will look back upon our era as one of barbarous ignorance and misery."¹ Another interesting feature is its firm belief that society was to be changed by the efforts of enlightened members of the upper classes, on the lines of an immense charity undertaking. The hero's widowed mother changed her native village into a model village, and when her only son comes into his, fortunately vast, fortune he decides to transform the East End of London, starting with one parish, which is changed from a slum into a social reformer's paradise. One day he meets a Mr. Jason Delphion who invites him to go with him to Tonia, an unknown country in the Himalayas, where descendants of the ancient Greeks have created an ideal commonwealth, "where/

1. A. Craig, Tonia, p. 24.

"where people have mastered the grand problem of human life." The last stage of the journey is made in an air-ship, and Musgrave finds himself among tall, good-looking men and women with Greek profiles, living in beautiful and practical houses. In many ways their state is reminiscent of Greek city-states: it is a republic, though without slavery, and everybody takes a personal interest in the affairs of the state. Education is considered very important, but much emphasis is placed on physical training and arts and crafts. "Everybody is very versatile: --- no one is surprised to find in a mechanic a consummate art critic, or a profound scholar."¹ Having realised that eugenics are the means of achieving an ideal state, Musgrave returns to London just in time to pick up a newspaper with a summary of a new Ohio Marriage Bill. The book ends on a triumphant note: "All hail to you, Americans! You have been foremost in many great and good works. Follow up this noble beginning of a great reform, and you shall ere long give to the nations of the earth the splendid spectacle of a people, with whom the golden age of poets' dreams has become a great and enduring reality."²

Although Morris and Craig both wrote 'classical' utopias, describing the kind of society in which they would like to live/

1. A. Craig, Ionia, p. 238.
2. do. do. p. 301.

live, one must not forget that this period was not one of unbroken optimism. There also appear certain signs of pessimism which cannot be ignored. This kind of fin-de-siecle gloom is best represented by the young H.G. Wells, who was to express such radiant optimism after the turn of the century. Much of this pessimism is to be found in his "science fiction"; The War of the Worlds, 1898, deals with an invasion by the Martians, from which our world is saved only by the fortunate fact that they succumb to our germs. However, as science fiction is not within the scope of this survey, When the Sleeper Awakes, 1899, is a more relevant example.¹ In this book we find a World State, organised as a vast Business State, efficiently and ruthlessly run by a group of leaders who exploit the "proles," the slave-workers who all wear blue uniforms and can be seen everywhere, performing the tasks that have not yet been taken over by machinery. They are in a state of mute rebellion and only lack a leader. He is miraculously provided in "the Sleeper," the nominal owner of the earth, who comes alive and escapes from the leaders to the opposition. At first he is much impressed by all the technical gadgets of this new world: the roofed-in, air-conditioned cities, the moving pavements, the/

1. Republished in 1921 as When the Sleeper Awakes.

the "television" etc. but when he begins to take in its implications he realises that this is an evil world:

"Dumb, crippled millions, countless millions all the world over, ignorant of anything but limitations and unsatisfied desires. They are born, they are thwarted, and they die."¹

That is the state the proles have been reduced to, and they are systematically educated to remain slaves: "Little children of labouring classes, so soon as they were of sufficient age to be hypnotised, were thus converted into beautifully punctual and trustworthy machine-minders and released forthwith from the long, long thoughts of youth."²

In the 1921 Preface Wells draws attention to the fact that his conception of the Business State is "a practical realisation of Mr. Belloc's nightmare of the Servile State," which, however, was not published till 1912. Present-day readers are reminded of Huxley and Orwell, though the nightmare quality of this state is very mild, compared with theirs, and presumably the outbreak of the civil war at the end of the book implies that a new and better state of things is to follow; so in fact the book ends on a note of optimism.

1. H.G. Wells, When the Sleeper Awakes, p. 132.

2. do. do. do. p. 126.

CHAPTER IV.

It seems natural to treat the period from 1900 to 1917 as a whole, and regard World War I as a dividing factor in utopian thought. As will be seen, there exists a marked difference between pre-war utopias and those written in the 1920's and later; a difference that is even more noticeable after World War II. Up to 1914 the general trend of utopian thought was mainly optimistic; the first year of the new century saw the conversion of H.G. Wells, who became the prophet of progress. Faith in the boons of science and technology was still, on the whole, unshaken; though there are exceptions, like J.E. Flecker and E.M. Forster. However, the short utopian stories, in which these authors expressed their misgivings, did not attract much attention until they were published in book-form after the war, and will be treated in their psychological context. Most utopian writers took it for granted that men would easily master the results of unlimited scientific research. It is true that biologists had lost a little of their former "proud and happy belief that human knowledge had at last succeeded in penetrating into a domain which had previously defied all/

all effort" (the mystery of life)¹; but non-specialists still had a comforting conception of evolution and of the vistas it opened to mankind. Mendel had just been rediscovered, but it would take his ideas thirty years to penetrate into utopian fiction; and psychology was still in its beginning. Physics and chemistry were for experts only, but anybody could be called upon to give an opinion on education - a topic which has been of interest among utopian writers since Plato.

However, the key figure of this period is undoubtedly H.G. Wells. In dealing with his utopian work the main problem is one of selection, for Wells wrote more or less utopian fiction from the 1890's to the 1940's. However, I have chosen A Modern Utopia, 1905, as the key work to be treated in detail, and references to earlier or later works will only be given in passing.

In treating A Modern Utopia I have decided to set it against a background of certain non-fictional works that Wells wrote just after the turn of the century. In Anticipations and Mankind in the Making (both first published in 1901 and 1903 respectively, in The Fortnightly Review) one can see quite clearly that Wells did not begin writing his articles on the future with a clear conception of/

1. E. Cassirer, The Problem of Knowledge, p. 176.

of the necessity of a World State and its organisation - that was something he came to realise as he was "discussing what was likely to happen in the new century." But "writing the human prospectus" fascinated him; and what was begun in Anticipations was carried on in Mankind in the Making, and finally treated in A Modern Utopia, as he explains in A Note to the Reader in A Modern Utopia.

In Anticipations, one can see the idea of the World State, the "New Republic", growing, almost in spite of its author, into a necessary outcome of his arguments - not as a clearly preconceived idea to start with. The arguments are mainly as follows: As locomotion is made easier and faster, people are no longer hampered by what used to be long distances, and therefore communities tend to become larger and larger - hence finally one huge community, the World State. The technical improvements make society more and more dependent on engineers and scientists - hence a new influential class of skilled technicians who will ultimately change the structure of society itself - hence the New Republic. These main ideas emerge rather hesitantly among a litter of more or less inspired guesses at the future construction of roads and houses, new systems of education and new conceptions of morals etc. "The higher organism, the World-State of the/

the coming years" is not introduced until the end of Chapter V, but once the phrase was coined Wells saw its importance and became "his own disciple," as he says in his Autobiography. In the following chapters the idea grows more and more dominant, though Wells is careful not to commit himself to details about precisely what kind of state it was going to be. "The world has a purpose greater than happiness; our lives are to serve God's purposes, and that purpose aims, not at man as an end, but works through him to greater issues ----." ¹ It is the abundance of sentences like this that makes A.L. Morton unkindly but aptly talk of Wells's tendency to use "a cluster of generalities trailing off into a string of dots."² Wells himself uses the expression "lucid vagueness."

In any case, for all this vagueness the fact remains that in 1901 Wells had actually become convinced that a World State was inevitable; and although he expected it to emerge of its own accord, the process would be accelerated if people were aware of what was happening to them and took steps accordingly.

The articles were a great success and when they were printed in book-form in 1902, they "sold as well as a novel."
Wells/

1. H.G. Wells, Anticipations, p. 318.

2. A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 192.

Wells wrote a new series of articles, also published in book-form, in 1903, and called them Mankind in the Making. Here he starts with the conception of New Republicanism, rather loosely defined as a way of living that leaves the world better than one found it. "A man who will build on that expression as his foundation in political and social matters, has at least the possibilities of agreement in the scheme of action these papers will unfold. For though we theorize it is at action that our speculations will aim. They will take the shape of an organized political and social doctrine. It will be convenient to give this doctrine a name, and for reasons that will be clear enough to those who have read my book Anticipations this doctrine will be spoken of throughout as "New Republicanism," the doctrine of the New Republic.¹ It is also an optimistic work: "Directly the discovery was made clear - and it is, I firmly believe, the crowning glory of the nineteenth century to have established this discovery for all time - that one generation does not follow another in fac simile, directly we come within sight of the reasonable persuasion that each generation is a step, a definite measurable step, and each birth an unprecedented experiment, directly it grows clear that instead of being in/

1. H.G. Wells, Mankind in the Making, p. 7.

in an eddy merely, we are for all our eddying moving forward upon a wide voluminous current, then all these things are changed."¹

The book is mainly concerned with the various ways of realizing this new world, and the emphasis is on education. The most interesting chapters are those on Schooling and the Organization of the Higher Education, where one meets Wells himself, with all his varied experiences as a pupil and a teacher, his prejudices and his shrewdness. There is the scientist with his insistence on biology for everybody, and the writer with his emphasis on a sound teaching of English for everybody. In this work Wells deals with the possibilities of man-making. Although he accepts heredity, he shows what could be done to mould a personality. "Certain things he must be, certain things he may be, and certain things are for ever beyond his scope."² But the secondary things, learning, habits, training etc., constitute "the manufactured man, the artificial man," and here society has a chance to decide what kind of civilized citizen it wants.³

The/

1. H.G. Wells, Mankind in the Making, p. 18.
2. do. do. do. p. 74.
3. This thought appears in his later utopias too. As late as 1933 he says: "Men are born, but citizens are made." (The Shape of Things to Come, p. 258.)

The last chapter points forward to the idea of the Samurai in A Modern Utopia. "For the New Republican, as for his forerunner the Puritan, conscience and discipline must saturate life. He must be ruled by duties and a certain ritual in life. Every day and every week he must set aside time to read and to think, to commune with others and himself; he must be as jealous of his health and strength as the Levites of old. Can we in this generation make but a few thousands of such men and women, men and women who are not afraid to live, men and women with a common faith and a common understanding, then, indeed, our work will be done. They will in their own time take this world as a sculptor takes his marble, and shape it better than all our dreams."¹

It is only fair to Wells to mention that he himself has commented on the woolliness of matter and style in the above paragraph, "but it is a proper part of the story to record a phase when I did come to the surface and spout like that, before I took breath and went down into things again."²

When Wells did go "down into things again" he came to the surface with A Modern Utopia, published in 1905. Looking back at it in 1934 he says: "Although it has never had/

1. H.G. Wells, Mankind in the Making, p. 396.
2. do. Experiment in Autobiography, p. 656.

had any great sale, A Modern Utopia remains to this day one of the most vital and successful of my books. It is as alive to-day as Mankind in the Making is dead."¹

This is certainly not true in 1958; it is impossible to feel for the book as its author did, and no amount of artificial respiration could bring it back to life.

It is strange that it should be so dated, for A Modern Utopia was published fifteen years after News from Nowhere, by a young man who was very much aware of the latest trend of thought and who had a scientific training which had made him realise the implications of biology and biochemistry, As a young student at the Normal School of Science in South Kensington he had gone to Hammersmith to listen to "a lean young Shaw with a thin flame-coloured beard beneath his white, illuminated face, or to Graham Wallas, drooping scholarly, and fastidiously lucid,"² and in 1903 he had joined the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour Party.

In order to understand certain features in Wells's utopian works it is necessary to know a little about himself. So far no satisfactory biography of Wells has appeared, and the most rewarding source of information is still his autobiography, published in 1934. His first years were spent/

1. H.G. Wells, Experiment in Autobiography, p. 658.
 2. do. do. do. p. 244.

spent in Bromley, where his father kept a small shop and was also a professional cricketer. His mother had been lady's maid at a great house. Though the family was poor, she tried hard to keep up appearances and she was very careful not to let her little boy play with "common children" who might teach him naughty words. Although there was a state school near by, he was sent to a private school, Mr. Morley's Commercial Academy - however bad it might be, it was at any rate not a National School!

"If Tommy Morley could not sport a university gown and hood, he could at least claim to wear a gown and hood as an L.C.P. (by royal charter) ^{that} /was indistinguishable to the common eye from the real thing. He had all the dignity, if little of the substance, of scholarship."¹ The last sentence is curiously revealing - Wells himself, for all his knowledge, could have done with another attitude towards "the substance of scholarship." And he continues: --- I certainly had no disposition to sacrifice my conceit of being made of better stuff, intrinsically and inherently, than most other human beings, by any self-identification with people who frankly took the defeated attitude. I thought the top of the form better than the bottom of the form, and the boy who qualified better than the boy who failed/

failed to qualify."¹

He did go to the top, but the way there was not an easy one. It cost him, among other things, his health. From the age of thirteen he had to fend for himself. He was an apprentice to a draper and then to a chemist, he had jobs at various private schools as an assistant master, he went to London as a state student at South Kensington, living on £1 a week, he worked as biology tutor for the University Correspondence College. Via journalism he took to literature. Beatrice Webb, who knew him well, says of him that his early life had "given him a great knowledge of the lower middle class and their thoughts and habits, and an immense respect for science and its method. But he is totally ignorant of the manual worker on the one hand, and of the big administrator and aristocrat on the other."² Consciously or unconsciously Wells must have been aware of these gaps which were never completely filled by his subsequent experiences, for he states that his conception of a "scientifically organized classless society" - incidentally his World State is never classless, for there is always a ruling elite - "is essentially of an expanded middle-class which has incorporated both the aristocrat and plutocrat above and the peasant, proletarian and/

1.H.G. Wells, Experiment in Autobiography, p. 94.

2.Beatrice Webb, Our Partnership, p. 23.

and pauper below."¹

Wells's preoccupation with utopias is very noticeable - he went on writing more or less utopian works up to his death - and in his attempts to work out a pattern of evolution in the way things went he is sometimes optimistic, sometimes pessimistic. A.L. Morton explains his many utopias by his "permanent state of having second thoughts about everything,"² but, judging from Wells's works, it seems to me that his main characteristic was having new thoughts about everything. In a way his mind seems oddly adolescent: alert and vivacious, enthusiastic and easily influenced. He does not seem to have allowed one idea to mature before he was on to a new, and his sensitiveness to atmosphere is amusingly illustrated by his attitude during World War I, when he went violently patriotic, anti-German and even religious - all facts he finds it very difficult to explain away in his Autobiography. This flair for what was in the air, so to speak, was probably what made him so stimulating to his contemporaries and so/

1. H.G. Wells, Experiment in Autobiography, p. 94.

2. A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 183.

so unsatisfactory to a later generation.¹ A shrewd judge of character like Beatrice Webb was aware of this and wrote in her diary, April 19th, 1904. "We like him much - he is absolutely genuine and full of inventiveness - a "speculator" in ideas - somewhat of a gambler, but perfectly aware that his hypotheses are not verified. In one sense, he is a romancer spoilt by romancing - but, in the present stage of sociology, he is useful to gradgrinds like ourselves in supplying us with loose generalisations which we can use as instruments of research. And we are useful to him in supplying an endless array of carefully sifted facts and broad administrative experience."²

The reader does not enter *A Modern Utopia* easily. There is A Note to the Reader and an introduction, and Wells's reasons for this arrangement are dealt with at the end of this chapter, page 84. One is introduced to the Owner of the Voice, who is sitting on a stage, reading from his/

1. In an essay on H.G. Wells, published in 1958, Anthony West has tried to make out a case for Wells's fundamentally pessimistic outlook, taking early works like When the Sleeper Awakes, and very late ones from the 1940's as proofs of this. A Modern Utopia is not even mentioned. However, it seems more likely that this vacillation is not a case of optimism heroically superimposed on deep pessimism but just another example of H.G. Wells's lack of consistency. See Anthony West, Principles and Persuasions, pp. 4-20.
2. Beatrice Webb, Our Partnership, p. 289.

his manuscript, while pictures intermittently move across a screen behind him, but one is explicitly told that this "is not to be taken as the Voice of the ostensible author, who fathers these pages."¹ The rather more shadowy figure of the Botanist is also introduced. But once the initial stages have been passed, one finds much of interest.

Wells has taken the trouble to read the more important classical utopias, and his discussion of them is interesting in itself and throws light on some of his own main points.

One of them is his insistence on a World State. No longer can Utopia be sent on an island or in some remote part of the earth - Wells with his interest in inter-planetary flights and the like chooses a planet. "Out beyond Sirius, far in the deeps of space, beyond the flight of a cannon-ball flying for a billion years, beyond the range of unaided vision, blazes the star that is our Utopia's sun."² He is also perfectly aware of the practical difficulties for any one state to keep itself to itself and realises that a state that can do this must be strong enough to rule the world. "World-State, therefore, it must be!"

This conception brings with it an enormous bureaucracy, as the State must be able to check up on its citizens.

"The/

1. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. 1.
2. do. do. p. 9.

"The old Utopias are sessile organisations; the new must square itself to the needs of a migratory population ---." ¹

So Wells thinks up a vast system of identification. Every one is to be equipped with an index card, complete with thumb-print and a record of other physical characteristics, and his movements and achievements are continually checked and indexed. "A filter of offices would sort the stream (of information) and all day and all night for ever a swarm of clerks would go to and fro correcting this central register and photographing copies of its entries for transmission to the subordinate local stations, in response to their inquiries. So the inventory of the State would watch its every man, and the wide world write its history as the fabric of its destiny flowed on." ² Wells did realise that this arrangement might not appeal to everybody; that, in fact, some people might object on principle to the fact that "only the State would share the secrets of one's little concealment," but he argues that, with good government, this kind of old fashioned nineteenth century Liberalism would completely disappear. It is one of the most striking examples of optimism in this fundamentally optimistic utopia that its author was genuinely delighted that the eye of the State was always watching its citizens, until/

1.H.G. Wells, A. Modern Utopia, p. 113.

2. do. do. pp. 114-115.

until their index cards were taken out of the files and passed on to the records of the dead.¹

Another new and interesting feature of this modern utopia is that it does not represent an ideal static commonwealth in the classical meaning. It is an ideal commonwealth of post-Darwinian origin - the idea of evolution permeated it. "The Modern Utopia must be not static but kinetic, must shape not as a permanent state but as a hopeful stage, leading to a long ascent of stages."² Wells does not look upon his utopia as final; he finds it more likely that every generation will have its own, each a little better and nearer to the goal than the one before it.

Other authors of utopias have more or less tacitly assumed a fundamental change for the better in mankind - an idea/

1. That later events had not passed unnoticed by Wells is shown in his later utopias. The second thought is most noticeable in The New World Order, 1940, from which the following quotations are taken: "But the more functions your government controls, the more need there is for protective law."

(p. 80.)

"The more socialisation proceeds and the more directive authority is concentrated, the more necessary is an efficient protection of individuals from the impatience of well-meaning or narrow-minded or ruthless officials and indeed from all the possible abuses of advantage that are inevitable under such circumstances to our still childishly wicked breed." (p. 137).

2. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. 4.

idea to which evolutionism had given scientific sanction - but Wells seems to have belonged to the later, less doctrinaire Darwinians. As A.L. Morton points out: "in Wells's utopias everything changes except man."¹ For all the fundamental changes in living conditions, beliefs and ideals, human beings are much the same, perhaps just a little healthier and better-looking.² The mass of people are divided into four groups, for reasons of classification, namely the Poietic, the Kinetic, the Dull and the Base, and as this is a classification based on temperaments and psychological types, it gives an impression of finality. Although steps are taken to prevent the Base from reproducing their kind, they are still a problem to the State. What is evident is; however, that Wells is not really interested in the majority of the people - most of his attention is given to the group of leaders, the Samurai. The idea that the world can be changed only through a group of leaders, inherently nobler and more efficient than the multitude, is fundamental in Wells's utopian works. He himself attributed his lack of faith in the masses to the experiences of his early days, when he was one of Morley's Bull/

1. A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 190.

2. This is brought out very clearly in Chapter the Eighth, when the Owner of the Voice meets his utopian double, who is a kind of better self but "in spite of our vast difference in training and habits, curiously akin." (page 179).

Bull Dogs and fought the elementary schoolboys, the Bromley Water Rats. "So far as the masses went, I was entirely of my mother's way of thinking; I was middle class - 'petty bourgeois' as the Marxists have it."¹

So over and above the masses, classified according to temperaments, stands the body of the Samurai, in whose hands the power of the whole World State has been placed. The Samurai were anticipated in Mankind in the Making - see page 79 - but here the conception is worked out in detail. They form a kind of voluntary nobility, open to all who follow the Common Rule, which was "planned to exclude the dull, to be unattractive to the base, and to direct and co-ordinate all sound citizens of good intent."² We are told that the organisation was formed in times of crises, that its members hold all the responsible posts in Utopia and that the order is not hereditary. Any intelligent and healthy person may become one of the Samurai after the age of twenty five. The Rule consists of three parts: a list of qualifications, a list of things that must not be done, and a list of things that must be done. The outcome is a Spartan life with many small pleasures forbidden, and a certain ascetic tendency. One feature is/

1. H.G. Wells, Experiment in Autobiography, p. 94.
 2. do. A Modern Utopia, pp. 193-194.

is the annual week of solitude, during which each Samurai must go out alone into the mountains or forests. They "must speak to no man, or woman, and have no sort of intercourse with mankind. They must go bookless and weaponless, without pen or paper, or money."¹ And they come back strengthened and purified. As could be expected Wells has acknowledged his debt to Plato's guardians, with whom the Samurai are so closely connected; and he suggests that the chapter on the Samurai should be read with "an implicit reference to Plato's profound intuitions."²

Although Wells was at that time a member of the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour Party, and also fully aware that "our political economical order is becoming steadily more Socialistic"³ he does not make his Modern Utopia nearly so Socialist as Morris had made his. For one thing, he was far too much of an individualist to want to part with individual enterprise. The Samurai are the governing body where individual enterprise and state control blend. The State owns all land and all sources of energy and leases them for periods up to fifty years. It provides law and order, distributes labour, maintains public health and subsidises research and such enterprises as will benefit/

1. H.G. Wells, A. Modern Utopia, p. 210.
2. do. do. p. 180.
3. do. do. p. 61.

benefit the community as a whole. Money has not been abolished, nor private property. Perhaps the following passage should be seen against Wells's own personal experiences: (Money) "is the water of the body social, it distributes and receives, and renders growth and assimilation and movement and recovery possible. It is the reconciliation of human inter dependence with liberty. What other device will give a man so great a freedom with so strong an inducement to effort?"¹ The same thought recurs in a passage on private property: "--- a man without some negotiable property is a man without freedom, and the extent of his property is very largely the measure of his freedom."² Where private property is concerned, the attitude of A Modern Utopia is very much that of a Welfare State: a man's property is only his through his lifetime, and on his death the main part of it goes back to the State in death duties. But as the State also shoulders certain responsibilities such as caring for the old and the sick and providing education, "the object of Utopian economics will be to give a man every inducement to spend his surplus money in intensifying the quality of his surroundings, either by economic adventures and experiments, which may yield either losses or large profits, or in increasing the beauty, the/

1. H. G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. 51.

2. do. do. p. 64.

the pleasure, the abundance and promise of life."¹

Wells has an attitude to labour that is fundamentally different from that of Morris. Everywhere in News from Nowhere one finds happy people working at road repairs, house-building, harvesting etc., and they are all aware of the fact that work is a means of happiness and satisfaction. In A Modern Utopia Wells argues that human happiness is largely due to the fact that labour is no longer necessary. Machinery has taken it over. He is apt to look down on the old fashioned ways of solving labour questions in earlier utopias, where they "ran their world by hand" and were dependent on slaves or compulsory work. To him machinery and technical inventions are science's gifts to the world, and he could not understand that Morris after much consideration rejected them. Wells sees Morris's attitude as a slavish following of a tradition that Plato started, a kind of blind spot. "It needed the Olympian unworldliness of an irresponsible rich man of the shareholding type, a Ruskin or a Morris playing at life"² to imagine that labour could be made rewarding, that there might be an element of pleasure in a group of people working for a common end. When the Owner of the Voice and his friend the Botanist are employed for a short time in a factory/

1. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. 67.

2. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. 70.

factory that turns out wooden toys, it is explicitly stated that the carvers are "the riffraff of Utopia" and receive the minimum wage. But there is none of the happy casualness of News from Nowhere, and one is not at all surprised that "the rules of the game as between employer and employed in this particular industry hang on the wall behind us; they are drawn up by a conference of the Common Council of Wages Workers with the employers."¹ So A Modern Utopia is planned like a civil engineer's paradise or a dream laboratory, full of all the labour-saving inventions and gadgets that Wells loved. He is as pleased as any little boy of ten that his utopian train takes him to London at the speed of two hundred miles an hour, and "there is nothing to prevent a Channel Tunnel in that other planet."² Electricity has, of course, superseded coal and, for sanitary reasons, animals have been practically abolished or are at least kept out of the way. Wells gives very detailed accounts of house planning - most people live in hotels or clubs, though private houses may be used; - and this is the room in which the Owner of the Voice wakes up on his first morning in Utopia: "It is beautifully proportioned and rather lower than most rooms I knew on earth./

1. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. 154.
 2. do. do. do. p. 168.

earth. There is no fireplace, and I am perplexed by that until I find a thermometer beside six switches on the wall. Above this switch-board is a brief instruction: one switch warms the floor, which is not carpeted, but covered by a substance like soft oilcloth; one warms the mattress (which is of metal with resistance coils threaded to and fro in it); and the others warm the wall in various degrees, each directing current through a separate system of resistances. The casement does not open "(Wells could not bear draughts!)" but above, flush with the ceiling, a noiseless rapid fan pumps air out of the room. The air enters by a Tobin shaft. --- Beside the bed, and to be lit at night by a handy switch over the pillow, is a little clock, its face flush with the wall. The room has no corners to gather dirt, wall meets floor with a gentle curve, and the apartment could be swept out effectually by a few strokes of a mechanical sweeper. The door frames and window frames are of metal, rounded and impervious to draughts. You are politely requested to turn a handle at the foot of the bed before leaving the room, and forthwith the frame turns up into a vertical position, and the bedclothes hang airing. You stand at the doorway and realise that there remains not a minute's work for any one to do."¹

One/

1. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, pp. 72-73.

One would expect this streamlined world to suffer from unemployment, but this is prevented by the fact that the State organises special works that are useful but not urgent, paying the "minimum wage." It may also reduce the working hours, until all surplus labour has been absorbed. And there is the possibility of being idle, if one can afford to buy that privilege; for so Wells regarded leisure. "A certain proportion of men at ease is good for the world; work as a moral obligation is the morality of slaves, and so long as no one is overworked there is no need to worry because some few are much-worked. Utopia does not exist as a solace for envy. From leisure, in a good moral and intellectual atmosphere, come experiments, come philosophy and the new departures."¹

Whereas Morris had been shocked by industrial ugliness, Wells accepts certain aspects of it as a necessary evil. He does not even question the necessity of unhealthy, ugly, distressing or even dangerous areas, "regions of mining, and smelting, black with the smoke of furnaces and gashed and desolated by mines, with a sort of weird inhospitable grandeur of industrial desolation."² However, workmen are not supposed to live in these districts, nor are children supposed/

1. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. 107.

2. do. do. p. 35.

supposed to grow up in anything but healthy, beautiful surroundings. Wells has, however, a keen aesthetic sense where engineering is concerned; tramways, culverts, iron bridges and the like are all beautiful in A Modern Utopia, for there "a man who designs a tram road will be a cultivated man, an artist craftsman; he will strive, as a good writer, or a painter strives, to achieve the simplicity of perfection. --- to count every man who makes things with his unaided thumb as an artist, and every man who uses machinery as a brute, is merely a passing stage of human stupidity."¹ But for all the insistence on good design there is a great difference between Morris's world and Wells's - perhaps that between the artist and the engineer? And the deep love for the English countryside that permeates News from Nowhere is a very different thing from Wells's liking for Swiss Alpine slopes.

The chapter called Woman in a Modern Utopia contains Wells's views on marriage and on woman's place in society. One of the most interesting notions is that of paid motherhood, with a higher salary for the mother if her child is above average standard; and "a capable woman who has borne, bred and begun the education of eight or nine well-built, intelligent,/"

1. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. 78.

intelligent, and successful sons and daughters would be an extremely prosperous woman, quite irrespective of the economic fortunes of the man she has married."¹ For these sums of money were payable to the mother only.

When William Morris lets William Guest move among the summer scenery of the Thames Valley, surrounded by friendly, happy people and yet not one of them, this brings out the fundamental difference in atmosphere between Utopia and the industrial England of the time just as much as the discussions and explanations do. Wells, on the other hand, does not want to take his reader into another world in the same sense as Morris did. He wants to discuss new ideas with him and convince him intellectually. The result is that Morris, who uses the age-old trick of the story-teller, brings his Nowhere to life; whereas Wells's Modern Utopia reminds one of a new shining toy that does not function. For in spite of all the wonders of workshop and laboratory this twin planet of ours is not very convincing. This is partly due to Wells's limitations, but also to the shape he gave his "novel". It is a compromise between fiction and discussion; and as there is much more of the latter, one is continually pulled back to earth in a rather jerky way even in the few chapters that are mainly narrative, such as Chapter the Fourth for instance. Wells probably realised/

1. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. 132.

realised this effect on the reader, for he anticipates criticism twice, both in A Note to the Reader and in the last chapter. "I explain all this in order to make it clear to the reader that, however queer this book appears to be, it is the outcome of trial and deliberation, it is intended to be as it is. I am aiming throughout at a sort of shot-silk texture between philosophical discussion on the one hand and imaginative narrative on the other."¹ This passion for discussion makes him send two people into his Modern Utopia, where they move about wholly as strangers, not having much intercourse with utopians and mostly squabbling with each other. For the Owner of the Voice needs the Botanist as an opponent - the latter is the narrowminded, sentimental, conventional kind of person who cannot grasp the broad visions that lead men to create a Modern Utopia. And when "the bubble bursts" and the two travellers find themselves back in London, it is the Botanist who has destroyed Utopia with a gesture and an angry word.

But for all that, just like Morris's News from Nowhere, A Modern Utopia ends on a hopeful note. There will be new generations to carry on the good work, "until at last from dreams Utopias will have come to be working drawings, and the/

1. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. viii.

the whole world will be shaping the final World State, the fair and great and fruitful World State, that will only not be a Utopia because it will be this world. So surely it must be ----."¹

Writing utopias seems to be an eminently English pastime. There is, however, one Scot who might be mentioned for other reasons than those of mere curiosity: James Macmillan Brown, who died in New Zealand in 1935.² Under the name of Godfrey Sweven he published a satire, Riallaro, 1901, and a utopia proper, Limanora, 1903. They appeared at the same time as Wells was leading up to A Modern Utopia, but they are both very different from anything he wrote. Riallaro can be passed over, being a kind of very inferior and rather repetitive Swiftian satire on the peoples of Coxuria, Meddla, Wotnekst, etc., but Limanora has one or two interesting points. It is obviously intended as a serious work, has the sub-title The Island of Progress, and deals with "the inner life of a self-selected people." Limanora civilization is thousands of years ahead of ours; inter-stellar migration, for instance, is a fact. When the stranger, who tells the story in the first person, for some mysterious reason is shot like a missile/

1. H.G. Wells, A Modern Utopia, p. 258.

2. See Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, 1946.

missile out of his yacht and lands in Limanora, the inhabitants decide to let him stay. "Your faculties and emotions and tendencies were all tested, and their various strengths measured by means of different kinds of cerebrometers while you slept,"¹ is what they tell him on his awakening in this new world. Some of the more fanciful notions of early psychology seem to be mirrored in "firla," an electric sense the Limanorans have developed, as well as their "eye-language," a kind of telepathy.

There generally is a close connexion between an author's life and his utopia. "Godfrey Sweven" was Professor of Classic and English Literature at University College, Canterbury, New Zealand; a fact that may explain the following passage: "They therefore abolished the profession of teacher, that manufacturer of uniformity, and all schools and universities, hotbeds of convention, worship of antiquity, and retrogression."² In Limanora, all education of the children is left to the parents. The past is studied in Fialume, the Valley of Memories, by those who wish to do so.

Utopias of the early 20th century are in some cases so different from one another though published within a year or two, that they make one wonder whether the personal element/

1. G. Sweven, Limanora, p. 8.
2. do. do. p. 39.

element is not, after all, a stronger influence than anything else. It can, of course, also be argued that when things are rapidly changing, it is perfectly possible to find new and old conceptions side by side. To go from Wells to Robert Blatchford is like going back from the days of the Fabian Society to the fighting Socialism of the eighties: The Sorcery Shop, 1907, is a charming utopia, but its charm is so old-fashioned that one gets a shock of surprise when one learns that the editor of The Clarion, was still alive in 1943. There are strong similarities between it and Morris's News from Nowhere, because the authors were both ardent, idealistic Socialists. Both created happy but decidedly anti-intellectual utopias: Morris because he had had the wrong kind of education, and Blatchford because he had had no education at all. Both had a keen sense of social injustice, and regarded capitalism and industrialism as evils to be abolished. Blatchford, who worked his way up from the bottom, knew from bitter experience that most working-class people in England, even then, had to put up with: "Foul air, foul water, adulterated foods, dirt, long hours of sedentary labour, and continual anxiety as to wages and employment in/

in the present, added to a terrible uncertainty as to existence in the future."¹ For him, as well as for Morris, Socialism was the answer; and they shared the belief that but for "the ignorance of the many and the foolish greed and vanity of the few, we might have a happy, healthy, and beautiful England now."²

Blatchford's book has the sub-title An Impossible Romance, and there is an amusing contrast between the business-like tone of the Author's Note: "I --- have tried to show the possibility of organising and carrying on a prosperous and healthy commune without calling in any other mechanical aids than those of which we are already the masters" and his sorcerer who uses a magician's wand to convey his travellers to a Manchester which is a garden city among flowering fruit-trees. The fairy-tale flavour is generally the stronger element: "We are not asleep," cried the General, ' and the prima donna at Covent Garden does make hearth-rugs, and the man who mends lightning rods is married to a purple-eyed Venus; and the population of Manchester are all vegetarians, and non-smokers, and teetotalers who don't know the meaning of the word 'damn'."³

The/

1. R. Blatchford, Merrie England, p. 23.
2. do. The Sorcery Shop, Author's Note.
3. do. do. p. 27.

The new England is, of course, a Socialist State. No private ownership of land is permitted, and money is abolished. Science has been developed (in spite of the Author's Note already quoted!) and this is not a state "run by hand." The working day is four hours. This is possible because "all waste is saved and the whole population is regularly and widely employed."¹ People devote much time to their hobbies, and are generally very versatile, though perhaps Miss Hilda Parker is an exception even here: "She is a librarian, and for four hours a day she is in attendance at the library; but she is far better known as a painter of English landscapes. She is a splendid artist; and in her spare time she makes musical instruments and studies natural history. --- In the same way the Astronomer-General is a master of rose-culture and designer of tapestries and mosaic."²

In this Socialist utopia the emphasis is on the family, and the mother educates the children, which, Blatchford thought, would safeguard them against unnecessary knowledge. "The heart of this civilization is the woman - the mother. When these English speak of England as their motherland, they use a true figure of speech."³

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|----|----------------|---------------------------|---------|
| 1. | R. Blatchford, | <u>The Sorcery Shop</u> , | p. 134. |
| 2. | do. | do. | p. 63. |
| 3. | do. | do. | p. 45. |

CHAPTER V.

As might be expected, the output of utopias dropped during the War years.¹ Not only was the number considerably smaller, but the quality, too, was inferior, and much of it can be regarded as utopian only by courtesy. Titles like Cleveland Moffett, The Conquest of America, a Romance of Disaster and Victory U.S.A. 1921, published in 1916, and Horace Newte, The Red Fury, Britain under Bolshevism, 1919, are typical of what was produced during World War I. One interesting detail is that "the Change" is made to take place in a very near future: Edgar Wallace called one pessimistic work 1925, The Story of a Fatal Peace, (1915), and John Colwyn, in 1919, called a "utopian" work A City Without a Church and dated a social revolution in 1938. These authors were, however, too limited in their outlook to be able to create works of any permanent interest, and as this survey is not concerned with works of sub-literary quality, unless they possess some feature of especial interest, the War years are a barren period for my purpose. So in a way, are the 1920's; for although a number of utopias were written under the shadow of the war, by various authors, there is no work of major importance. We find Socialist/

1. See R. Gerber, English Utopian Fantasy, pp. 146-147.

Socialist and Fascist satires, scientists' commonwealths, science fiction, feminist utopias and so on,¹ but nothing that can be regarded as a key work.

In the development of utopian fiction the First World War is a water-shed: before 1914 the "classical" utopia was the rule; after 1919 it became the exception. What is somewhat loosely referred to as "Victorian optimism" lasted up to the outbreak of the war, and it can even be maintained that the years after the turn of the century brought a revival of faith, in technical and scientific progress at least, after the flagging optimism in the 1890's. A Modern Utopia, as contrasted with the earlier works of H.G. Wells, can be quoted as an example of this particular revival.

However, after 1919 there is a different attitude altogether. The war had been a severe shock to all who had believed that major European wars were a thing of the past and that civilized nations would no longer try and blow each other to bits. The implications of chemical and mechanical warfare were obvious enough: even H.G. Wells was/

1. See Gerber, English Utopian Fantasy.
Ethel Mannin, Bread and Roses
H. Ross, Utopias Old and New.
R. Ruyer, L'Utopie et les utopies.

was aware of them, though he did not let them interfere with his optimism. "No intelligent brain that passed through the experience of the Great War emerged without being profoundly changed. Our vision of life was revised in outline and detail alike. To me, as to most people, it was a revelation of the profound instability of the social order. It was also a revelation of the possibilities of fundamental reorganization that were now open to mankind - and of certain extraordinary weaknesses in the collective mentality."¹ Many people had to face these problems that Wells touches on in passing; the League of Nations was one way of trying to cope with them; another was the view taken by Spengler in The Decline of the West, translated into English in 1926.

The conflicting moods of weariness, pessimism, cynicism, and disillusioned optimism are mirrored in the utopias of the decade. There is no dominating figure of the period, but the conflicting tendencies are brought out in the minor writers - in some cases minor only in this context, and in the sense that their utopias are not to be counted among their best work.

H.G. Wells published a couple of utopias, of which Men Like Gods, 1923, is the more important. In spite of the/
l.H.G. Wells, Autobiography, p. 666.

the faith in human co-operation and scientific progress, to which the book still bears witness, the War had not passed its author by completely. One sign of this is the opinion that the Peace was a glorious opportunity for mankind and must not be muddled; another is the subconscious fear of what the war had revealed. "A growing number of people were coming to understand that amidst the powerful and easily released forces that science and organisation had brought within reach of man, the old conception of social life in the state, as a limited and legalised struggle of men and women to get the better of one another, was becoming too dangerous to endure ---." ¹

However, sentences like this are rare, and the general impression is much the same as that conveyed in A Modern Utopia. There is the same emphasis on scientific and technical progress inevitably leading to a happy community. In this world "all actions are co-ordinated to secure general freedom" and also happiness for all; it is, in short, a classical utopia in the manner of his earlier ones without anything fundamentally new being added to it - except nudism and telepathy.

A very different attitude is the one revealed in Bernard Shaw's Back to Methuselah, 1921. Its Preface, an essay of some eighty pages, is, as usual, important; but the/

1. H.G. Wells, Men Like Gods, p. 231.

the anti-Darwinian view of evolutionism that Shaw learned from Samuel Butler before Mendel was rediscovered makes queer reading nowadays. More significant are the blows dealt in passing at favourite maxims of yesterday such as: "The Socialists were specially encouraged by Darwin's insistence on the influence of environment. Perhaps the strongest moral bulwark of Capitalism is the belief in the efficacy of individual righteousness, Robert Owen made desperate efforts to convince England that her criminals, her drunkards, her ignorant and stupid masses, were the victims of circumstance: that if we would only establish his new moral world we should find that the masses born into an educated and moralized community would be themselves educated and moralized."¹

Back to Methuselah is the only utopian play that I have come across, and its form (episodes taking place at certain given dates, ranging from the Garden of Eden to the year 31.920 A.D.) is probably the best way of overcoming the limitations of the stage. Like Wells, Shaw starts with a scientific outlook, though it is not a general belief in progress: the theme is that of Creative Evolution. As a giraffe, according to Shaw's ideas, had willed itself into growing a long neck, man might just as well/

1. B. Shaw, Back to Methuselah, p. lvi.

well will himself to live longer - say three hundred years, or for ever. So "the Thing Happens," and one of the most interesting notions of the play is the contrast between the "long-lived" and the "short lived." The latter never attain maturity and must not be confronted with the "long-lived." A man who strays into the forbidden territory is warned that "it is dangerous for shortlived people to come to this country. There is a deadly disease called discouragement, against which shortlived people have to take very strict precautions. Intercourse with us puts too great a strain on them."¹ This contrast between immaturity and maturity is brought out again in the last interlude, As Far as Thought Can Reach. Men have actually attained eternal life, or rather, they do not die until an accident befalls them. Young men and women are hatched from eggs, without having to go through childhood and adolescence, and enjoy four years of life, art and beauty in an arcadian existence. Then they "grow up" and lose all interest in human relationships, becoming more and more remote and happy in their solitary contemplation.

Whereas Wells had stressed human intercourse and cooperation, Shaw repudiates all forms of human relationship for a life in which external values are sacrificed to the "ecstasy/

1. B. Shaw, Back to Methuselah, p. 136.

"ecstasy of life" that the ancients enjoy. This, incidentally, is the same mystical pessimism that Herbert Read reaches in The Green Child, which will be dealt with in Chapter VI.

Another way of trying to come to terms with the strange new world of the post-war period was the use of irony. Rose Macaulay wrote two gentle satires, in which she pokes fun at certain aspects of modern England. Her satire is shrewd but not very far-reaching, and there is no wish to create something new from the old world.

What Not appeared in 1919, was dedicated to "Civil Servants I have known," and is a skit on bureaucracy. It shows what might happen, if a Ministry of Brains caused a Mental Progress Act and a Mind Training Act to be passed.

Probably quite a few parents of today, with Eleven Plus and Entrance Examinations looming in the distance, would think that Rose Macaulay was not far out in her forecasts, and that the next step might well be the one proposed in What Not, namely that in order to be allowed to marry one would have to produce a certificate of a satisfactory I.Q.

Orphan Island, 1924, is a much more amusing book, built on a very good idea. In 1855, a shipload of orphans, with a Victorian spinster in charge, is wrecked on a desert South Sea island. In 1924, a Cambridge sociologist sets out to look for them and finds that this isolated community's starting/

starting from scratch, so to speak, has developed into a miniature Victorian Great Britain. He encounters class distinctions, small snobberies and social prejudices, as well as opposition from the young and rebellious against their elders - and betters. The idea that the islanders are shipwrecked on a desert island "is not well received" by them, and the Prime Minister's protest is most dignified: "We have, indeed, --- taken Great Britain, her constitutions, her customs, and the unrivalled purity of her domestic and social life, for our model in this island colony, as you will observe very soon, if you spend any time among us. But we are an independent community, I may say a principality, and we have, I think, no desire permanently and as a nation to abandon our island home."¹ There is the same kind of double perspective as in Butler's Erewhon: satire aimed at Orphan Island is also aimed at Great Britain, and this double satire makes the book much more amusing. One more quotation will show the author's attitude: "With us," said Mr. Albert Edward Smith, "there is, on every question, a right side and a wrong. Some of us are habitually on one side, some on the other. It is a question, largely, of birth and breeding. Partly, also, of course, of age, wisdom, and experience."²

If/

1. Rose Macaulay, Orphan Island, p. 57.
2. do. do. pp. 76-77.

If Rose Macaulay tacitly accepts this world as it is, and is content to point out some of its absurdities, Charlotte Haldane is much more ambitious. She deals with the same problem as E. M. Forster before her, and Huxley and Orwell after her: a world ruled by scientists and technologists. She is one of the last utopian writers to accept this as a good thing, but she is unlike most other pro-scientific utopians in creating a tragic conflict. Old values cannot survive in the new ruthless form of society, and the author does not hesitate in siding with the latter. The Jew Mensch, one of the symbolic names Charlotte Haldane sometimes uses, "accurately foresaw the scientist, not as the perverter, nor the destroyer of mankind, but as the new director, the inevitable successor to the priest and the politician. He foresaw, but with less accuracy in detail, that under scientific direction mankind would have to travel a different road. He foresaw the possibility of arousing the scientist's consciousness of, and will to, power. He sought out and educated and set on their way those whose mission it was to do this."¹

Charlotte Haldane was married to J.B.S. Haldane, the biologist, and it is interesting to compare her vision of the future with that of her husband in The Last Judgment.

He/

1. Charlotte Haldane, Man's World, pp. 4-5.

He sees mankind as "happy" when they lived "in accordance with instincts that were gratified," and for him the individual is of little importance - the main thing is the survival of the species. When men realize that our planet will eventually become uninhabitable, they breed a race that will find it possible to migrate to Venus, for "though men died, man should live for ever."¹ In The Last Judgment one meets a kind of biological bird's eye view of life, with religion and "individual moral consciousness" dropped by the roadside, as entirely superfluous complications. It is interesting that this conflict, which gives added tension to Charlotte Haldane's story, simply does not exist for a biologist like J.B.S. Haldane. She realises that in the world of tomorrow there may not be room for the individualist, the artist and the mystic, but that they cannot be discarded with a shrug as adolescent stages in the development of mankind. When they are gone, the world will have suffered an irrevocable loss. She allows the religious mystic who will not conform, to state his case openly, in a way that reminds us of Huxley's Savage in Brave New World: "Tell me what there is in this world of yours for a person like me! --- As Long as I live, I shall feel an undying loathing of it all. You draw a map of man's consciousness as you do of the 'genes' of a rabbit./

1. J.B.S. Haldane, Possible Worlds and Other Essays, p. 302.

rabbit. You tinker about and fiddle about with every living thing; you babble about 'lethal factors' and 'survival value,' and all your other nonsense. Do you mean to tell me seriously that you attach the slightest ultimate significance to it all? Even as I speak to you, I can see what you are thinking. Neurosis, due to whatever you like to call it - and if we gave him so and so, and mucked about so, and with a few hefty doses of hypnosis, we could make quite a nice, normal little man of him."¹

The outcome is the only possible one: there is nothing in this world for a religious mystic, or even for a person with "individual moral consciousness. So an aeroplane with its dead master spins down to earth, "---- swooping through space, downward and backward, downward and backward - where he belonged."² But although Charlotte Haldane chooses the scientists' world, where men live long, happy, well-adjusted lives and not only the number of children but also their sex is regulated, and motherhood is a vocation, this is not a naive utopia. Its attitude is very different from H.G. Wells's ecstatic projections into the future with their boyish delight in mechanical toys. In Man's World they are tacitly taken for granted, not/

1. Charlotte Haldane, Man's World, p. 274.
 2. do. do. p. 286.

not enlarged upon, and though it may not be the world one would choose, at least one has to admit that it is an adult world.

CHAPTER VI.

The 1930's are a much more rewarding period for the student of utopian fiction than the 1920's. Tendencies that were only vaguely beginning to be noticeable, now appear quite unmistakably. This is the age of the anti-utopia - Huxley's Brave New World being the central utopia of the decade - but I have included a few more examples of the anti-utopia to show that there are considerable variations on the main theme. After Us is the freakish exception which can be found in any period, showing that however strong the general current is, one will find the personal element asserting itself.

Although Stapledon could hardly be called an original thinker, he is nevertheless interesting, partly because of his treatment of a utopian subject and partly because the choice of his subject-matter reveals some of the main influences on this period. The fact that he is not an original thinker is very clearly brought out in Last and First Men, 1930, his most serious utopian work. For, like Wells, he wrote several, one of which, Darkness and the Light, 1942, is a kind of double utopia, presenting
"in/

"in concrete form, but rather as caricature than with photographic accuracy, two kinds of possibility that lie before the human race."¹

Last and First Men, however, does not dangle two possibilities before mankind; the author has made up his mind what he wants to do and outlines man's future. In notions of time and space this is indeed a utopia on a grand scale - the Last Men live 2,000,000,000 years from now, according to Time Scale 4, and by that time man has migrated from Tellus to Venus and then onto Neptune.

The element of fiction is small, although the book is called A Story of the Near and Far Future. It has two authors, one living in the Time of Einstein, who considers the whole thing as a fantasy, and one of the Last Men. "A being whom you would call a future man has seized the docile but scarcely adequate brain of your contemporary, and is trying to direct its familiar processes for an alien purpose. Thus a future epoch makes contact with your age."² The difficulties of covering such a long period adequately are obvious, and they have by no means been overcome, especially as Stapledon does not possess the knack of appealing to his reader's imagination.

What/

1. O. Stapledon, Darkness and the Light, preface.
2. do. Last and First Men, p. 1.

What had been done successfully by J.B.S. Haldane in a short story, where endless repetitions are impossible turns out to be an artistic failure in Stapledon's book. If some of his notions had not been so arresting, this scientific fairy-tale would probably never have attracted much attention.

Stapledon has Man as his hero, and we follow him, not along "an upward path" but rather in a spiralling upwards, with plenty of set-backs, for Stapledon is clearly influenced by Oswald Spengler's ideas that "every creation is predoomed to decay,"¹ though he does not regard cultures as living organisms in the way Spengler does. Even though man is sometimes reduced to a mere beast, "the spark" is miraculously preserved, evolution sets in and a new race is bred - the final result being the Eighteenth Men. Much ingenuity is used, and sometimes misused, as for example in the Fourth Men, "Great Brains," artificially fed and housed in cement towers, served by the Third Men who eventually rebel against them. In the end the Super Brains set to work to produce a higher type, the Fifth Men ----.

However, the rise and fall of cultures and races, seen in this bird's eye perspective, is apt to appear a little repetitive, and in spite of summaries like the following, the/

1. O. Spengler, Man and Technics, p. 14.

the pattern becomes rather tedious: "We have watched the fortunes of eight successive human species for a thousand million years, the first half of that flicker which is the duration of man. Ten more species now succeed one another, or are contemporary, on the plains of Neptune. We, the Last Men, are the Eighteenth Men. Of the eight, pre-Neptunian species, some, as we have seen, remained always primitive; many achieved at least a confused and fleeting civilization, and one, the brilliant Fifth, was already wakening into true humanity when misfortune crushed it. The ten Neptunian species show an even greater diversity. They range from the instinctive animal to modes of consciousness never before attained. The definitely sub-human degenerate types are confined mostly to the first six hundred million years of man's sojourn on Neptune. During the earlier half of this long phase of preparation, man, at first almost crushed out of existence by a hostile environment, gradually peopled the huge north; but with beasts, not men. For man, as man, no longer existed. During the latter half of the preparatory six hundred million years, the human spirit gradually awoke again, to undergo the fluctuating advance and decline characteristic of the pre-Neptunian ages. But subsequently, in the last four/

four hundred million years of his career on Neptune, man has made an almost steady progress toward full spiritual maturity."¹

It should, perhaps, be pointed out that in 63 pages Stapledon manages to squeeze in the ten Neptunian species as well as lead up to the tragic end. And here the repetition method shows its limitations; the Last Men, faced with annihilation, trying to produce "artificial human dust capable of being carried forward on the sun's radiation, hardy enough to endure the conditions of a trans-galactic voyage of many millions of years, and yet intricate enough to bear the potentiality of life and of spiritual development."² seem just another case of the many preceding ones. Oddly enough, Stapledon himself has given the reason why the reader is not more moved by this tragedy of humanity: "In tracing man's final advance to full humanity we can observe only the broadest features of a whole astronomical era. But in fact it is an era crowded with many thousands of long-lived generations. Myriads of individuals, each one unique, live out their lives in rapt intercourse with one another, contribute their heart's pulses to the universal music, and presently vanish, giving place to others. All this age-long sequence/

1. O. Stapledon, Last and First Men, p. 293-94.
 2. do. do. p. 348.

sequence of private living, which is the actual tissue of humanity's flesh, I cannot describe. I can only trace, as it were, the disembodied form of its growth."¹

Stapledon fails, because he leaves at once too much and too little to imagination.

Whatever its artistic shortcomings, one cannot help being impressed by certain aspects of this work. It is not only quantitatively ambitious - much knowledge and ingenuity have gone into its making. Mendel is mentioned for the first time - as far as I know - in utopian fiction, psychology is included among "the other sciences," and current archaeological knowledge is incorporated with Spengler; but the result, as Gerber says, "cannot be called a literary success." From this point of view it is interesting to compare Stapledon's monotonous vista of rising and decaying races and cultures with the end of James Elroy Flecker's The Last Generation, a short story written in 1908 but republished in Collected Prose, 1922, where this process comes alive: "I saw the vast Halls and Palaces of men falling in slowly, decaying, crumbling; destroyed by nothing but the rains and the touch of Time. And, looking again, I saw wandering over and above the ruins, moving curiously about, myriads of brown, hairy, repulsive/

1. O Stapledon, Last and First Men, p. 301.

repulsive little apes.

One of them was building a fire with sticks."¹

One of the most striking features of Stapledon's utopia is its lack of interest in the structure of an ideal commonwealth. As Stapledon races through the millions of years one realises that he is not at all concerned with the kind of society man lives in. Future man is to be found, sometimes in a peaceful rural commonwealth, sometimes in an "engineers' paradise," sometimes, like the Seventh Men, who are pigmies "organised for flight," in an "aereal society," but in no case do we find more than a passing reference to the problem; and nowhere is there any attempt at showing how these communities work or why they fail. Emphasis has definitely changed from the construction of a working utopia to the question of man's survival, in the biological sense.

If Stapledon is very vague in all his references to what kinds of society man may, more or less accidentally, create in different cultures, Aldous Huxley is much more precise. His "utopia," too, is post-Mendel, post-Jung and post-Spengler, but in his case the ideas of these writers are assimilated into a much more mature and also much more sophisticated blend. Like E.M. Forster and Charlotte/

1. J.E. Flecker, Collected Prose, p. 32.

Charlotte Haldane he is aware of the problems that accelerated scientific progress has put before the world, but in his reactions he is very different from either. In E.M. Forster's When the Machine Stops we witness the suicide of mankind through science. If these almost artificial, subterranean human beings had been the only inhabitants of this earth, the breaking down of their wonderful Machine would have meant the end; but there is a glimmering of hope, for Kuno has made the forbidden journey to the surface of the earth and knows that other, real men live there. Charlotte Haldane, on the other hand, accepts the world the scientists will give us, even at the cost of certain spiritual values that cannot be incorporated into it. In Brave New World there is neither faith in scientific progress, nor belief in the possibility of a new beginning - state-controlled science has made either catastrophe or a new beginning equally impossible. The motto of the World State is COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, STABILITY. And the most important of the three is stability.

Although Huxley confessed himself bored and exasperated by books about the future¹ he has nevertheless written two, and he is obviously very well qualified for this kind of fiction./

1. J. Atkins, Aldous Huxley, p. 215.

fiction. As a member of a highly intellectual, scientifically famous family he brings to his task learning, culture and also considerable artistic ability. Perhaps the eye disease that, at the age of sixteen, threatened to make him blind and actually left him half-blind for years, meant as much for the shaping of his personality as did Eton and Oxford; in any case it must have contributed to the feeling of aloofness that is so typically Huxleyan.

Although the brave new world is a world state, Huxley, like Morris, takes his readers to London on a sunny summer day, but "the air is drowsy with bees and helicopters" and in the year After Ford London is a collection of sky-scrapers. There are no awkward preliminaries - nothing could be more direct than the opening lines: "A squat grey building of only thirty-four stories. Over the main entrance the words, CENTRAL LONDON HATCHERY AND CONDITIONING CENTRE, and, in a shield, the World State's motto ---." There is no wondering stranger from another world to introduce, - the story is told in the third person; but description and bits of dialogue build up a surprisingly convincing picture, and in a series of "flash-backs" we get glimpses that enable us to piece together the break-down of the old civilization. The/

The Nine Years' War. The great Economic Collapse. The Choice between World Control and destruction. "In the end," said Mustapha Mond, "the Controllers realised that force was no good. The slower but infinitely surer methods of ectogenesis, neo-Pavlian conditioning, and hypnopaedia ..."¹

In the classical utopias stability had been taken for granted, and it still is in Morris's News from Nowhere, Craig's Ionia and Blatchford's The Sorcery Shop. Wells brought evolution into utopia, and it looked as if it had come to stay; but Huxley has gone back again to the conception of a static society, and the inverted value that he gives to stability is one of the important features of his book. It is impossible to have perfect social stability without individual stability, and individual stability is much more easily achieved, if the individual is de-individualized. As a result we get the human ant-hill.

In the brave new world individuals are standardized, and feelings are watered down, for "when the individual feels, the community reels." Not only does The Central London Hatchery and Conditioning Centre turn out "bottled babies," predestined to become intelligent Alpha-Pluses or half-wit/

1. A. Huxley, Brave New World, pp. 41-42.

half-wit epsilons; they are pre-"naturally" conditioned, and the process goes on after decanting.¹ Hypnopaedia gives efficient social conditioning, and the process is carried on by press, film and radio, till the mind is a bundle of conditioned reflexes. When the socially well-adjusted Lenina is taken out by Bernard Marx, who happens to have turned out different from the rest ("they say somebody made a mistake when he was still in the bottle - thought he was a Gamma and put alcohol into his blood-surrogate") she tries hard not to listen to him. However, now and then "a phrase would insist on becoming audible.... to try the effect of arresting my impulses, she heard him say. The words seemed to touch a spring in her mind. 'Never put off till tomorrow the fun you can have today,' she said gravely. 'Two hundred repetitions, twice a week from fourteen to sixteen and a half,' was all his comment."² Here, men and women have been conditioned into feeling happy and contented. There is luxury and comfort/

1. This idea is by no means a new one in utopian fiction. Thirty years earlier, in Godfrey Sweenen's Limanora, we find "sleep-teaching" practised successfully, and "somniaology" is considered an important help to education. (p. 19). By using a Vrill-staff the Vrill-ya sink their visitor into a hypnotic sleep in Bulwer Lytton's The Coming Race, and when he wakes up, he finds that they have taught him their language as well as learnt his!
2. A. Huxley, Brave New World, p. 77.

comfort, health and security, organised leisure, organised substitutes for love and religion. "Everybody's happy now." "Everybody belongs to everybody else." And if anything should go wrong, there is always soma; "all the advantages of Christianity and alcohol; none of their defects."

But even in this the most perfectly planned of all worlds there are a few misfits. Among the Alpha-Pluses ("one egg, one adult") exceptional individuals cannot always be avoided: Bernard Marx, "eight centimetres short of the Alpha height," and haunted by a feeling of inferiority, is one, and Helmholtz Watson, mentally and physically superior to his surrounding, is another. They are drawn together by their apartness. As they are individuals they run the risk of being transferred to an island - the severe punishment for not conforming. "Unorthodoxy threatens more than the life of a mere individual; it strikes at society itself."¹

Huxley is, however, not content with the criticism from within that Marx and Watson contribute; so in order to show up the values of the brave new world the Savage is brought in. His background and ethics are entirely different: Marx finds him in a New Mexico Reservation, where/

1. A. Huxley, Brave New World, p. 121.

where he has grown up on a mixture of Shakespeare and mixed religious myths. The confrontation is a painful experience; and the Savage finds himself unable to accept the state of controlled "happiness" where everything is too cheap and responsibility has been lifted off men's shoulders long ago. In vain does the Resident Controller for Western Europe point out that this is the world most people prefer - the Savage rejects it and chooses the right to be unhappy. "Not to mention the right to grow old and ugly and impotent, the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen to-morrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind." There was a long silence. 'I claim them all,' said the Savage at last."¹ His life of isolation and penitence, outside the community ends in madness and suicide.

In a Foreword to a new edition in 1946, Huxley has commented on his book, saying that he no longer finds the choice between "insanity on the one hand and lunacy on the other" an amusing one. If he were to rewrite the book to-day, he would give the Savage a third alternative: the/

1. A. Huxley, Brave New World, p. 197.

the possibility of sanity, that "rather rare phenomenon." He also points out that the omission of references to atomic energy is odd but perfectly understandable, for the theme is "the advancement of science as it affects human individuals." Unlike H.G. Wells he puts very little emphasis on technical progress, which is more or less taken for granted. One is perhaps more surprised that the economic system should be so vaguely sketched, Everybody receives a salary and everybody is compelled to consume so much a year, "in the interests of industry." But why this emphasis on consumption to keep up production, when the size of the population is completely under control? Another surprising fact is the number of sub-standard workers that are turned out. Surely machines could do that type of simple work much more efficiently with one or two skilled technicians to look after them, so why bother with groups of Bokanovsky twins? And then one realises that groups of eighty-four identical Gamma twins are necessary - as a warning. This swarming multitude of identical faces, bodies and minds is the price of material welfare. When, all agog with the excitement of death-conditioning, they surge over his dying mother, the Savage as well as the reader sees the

bfave/

brave new world for what it is - a nightmare.

John Kendal (probably a pseudonym for Margaret M. Brash) had the misfortune to publish Unborn To-Morrow in 1933, a year after Huxley's anti-utopia had appeared. It is a much less important book, but as a sign of reaction against certain modern phenomena it is significant.

In Kendal's book the warning note is much more apparent. The new type of Communist society is supposed to have come into being after the Great Epidemic, the Glorious Reformation and the 1938 World War. In 1995 the States of the United World have been functioning for a few decades, long enough for a new generation to have been brought up on its principles, but not long enough for people with memories of another kind of world to have died out.

England is considered a difficult member of the World State: "High Command in Moscow was seriously considering closing the land and removing the entire population across to the Continent..."¹ This had already been tried out; Scotland, because of its stubbornly individualistic Nordic population, had already been closed down! London is completely rebuilt: "Along the impressive State road with its colonnades and fine mural enclosures with their groups of bold statuary were imposing blocks of hostels, the very latest word in modern/

1. J. Kendal, Unborn To-Morrow, p. 122.

modern domestic architecture. Inside they were marvels of luxury and hygiene: show-places reserved for State officials, rivalling those even in Moscow. Behind this lordly avenue was a forest of ruinous buildings, grass-grown streets and tangled gardens, the deserted London of the past."¹

But all is not well in this well-planned world - people do not respond as they ought. Short working hours and no responsibility make them listless or hysterical or just ill-tempered; and there is one vital problem that High Command must solve: the birthrate is falling ominously. "The State had encouraged a type more easily governed, had sacrificed mental endowments to inferior qualities, had like stockbreeders, bred for physical points."²

The anti-Communist attitude in Kendal's work is evident; his race mysticism makes him direct his warning against the Slavs rather than against totalitarian states as such. Herek, the brilliant young hero of the book, is Nordic: aggressive and difficult, passionately interested in his work, a born leader who bitterly resents being a State sheep. His rebellion is the main theme of the book. Because of tuberculosis in his family, he is not allowed to/

1. J. Kendal, Unborn To-Morrow, p. 95.
2. do. do. p. 223.

to marry, but he falls in love and escapes with the girl into the Lake District, a kind of Reservation for "irreconcilables," rather like the colony into which Huxley's young couple in Ape and Essence escape. Kendal actually introduces a happy end: Herek tells his family one day that Communism is beaten in England (in the most parliamentary fashion) and from now on "the old Communist system will exist side by side with the new individualistic." Naturally there is no mentioning of how this will work out - the reader is probably expected to realise that Communism will be peacefully superseded by this "new individualistic system."

If Huxley's criticism of a planned society had been more intellectual than emotional, Kendal's is the other way round. Comfort and security are not enough; that is the message of this book, and it is expressed indirectly in the restiveness of people in this new world, but also by direct criticism. Herek has come across an old man, an "irreconcilable" from the 1938 War, who sums up his repudiation of the new values in the following words: "You robbed man of God, of the world to come, of hope of developing in this life and of living again in life everlasting; and in return you have given him days of empty leisure/

leisure, where you spend your lives like schoolboys in endless study and sport. --- You, your new world, have cancelled danger, pain, fear, and worry. Life exacts its price for all these things; the price you pay is infinite tedium, a grey monotony of comfortable security." He paused again. "Go now, go back to your security, your leisure and ease, your painless death, and know that is the end, for your world has sinned the unforgivable sin, it has denied the divine in man."¹ What seems to imply a step backward is the lack of scientific, especially biological, knowledge in this utopia: one cannot help feeling that it is rather backward for a World High Command in 1995 to find a falling birthrate an unsurmountable difficulty. But as a sign of what was occupying men's minds in the thirties it is significant.

Another of these revealing utopias is John Palmer's The Hesperides, published in 1936. Like Unborn To-Morrow, it has political point, and in spite of its wit there is an unmistakable undertone of seriousness. This is best brought out in the comments of the traveller to Hesperus: "I had clearly seen the peril of community and felt all its implications for ourselves. For it weighs upon us increasingly in the tyranny of herds, governments, nations, sects,/"

1. J. Kendal, Unborn To-Morrow, p. 80-81.

sects, and parties, in the standardising of our emotions and minds, in the synchronising of our pleasures. --- Man stands in peril of the mass. --- And I know that, for those who live under the fasces, the time comes when they are found to be no more than a bundle of dry sticks."¹

There is another thing that reminds one of Unborn To-Morrow: highly scientific mating has resulted in a healthy standard type, which, however, seems to refuse to reproduce itself. The Hesperides, too, have trouble with their birth-rate, and also with the falling-off in intelligence among the population, although there is another system for the leading group: "It is only when a higher standard of intelligence is required, with initiative and a capacity for dealing with the unexpected, that it becomes necessary for men to choose or be chosen by their wives and for parents to keep in touch with their children."²

Palmer gave his book the sub-title A Looking-Glass Fugue and warned his public that "This book should not be read by anyone who has the smallest respect for things as they are." There is a refreshing attitude towards contemporary science - the visitor to Hesperus emerges there from the fourth dimension - and journeys through time are undertaken/

1. J.L. Palmer, The Hesperides, p. 318-19.
2. do. do. p. 63-64.

undertaken in the most casual way: "I shall go back into the past and return from the future. I might, of course, go forward into the future and return from the past, but I think that on the whole it will be safer the other way round. There is less chance of my losing the way. I shall travel slowly at first, fixing my direction from such events in the past as I can remember. Landmarks, you know. --- I shall take off into the great unconscious at the point of birth and travel with infinite speed round the circle of eternity. If the course be well and truly laid, I shall ultimately return by way of my death back to the present."¹

Hesperus is a planet where the citizens are strictly classified into Supreme Governors, Advisers, Censors etc. with a standardised population at the bottom. There are discreet allusions to the methods used by dictators.

"Almost his first act on assuming the crown was to organize a systematic destruction of all books, records, works of art or monuments which in any way suggested that any other modes of thought or feeling than those which he deemed necessary to survival had at any time prevailed. This measure applied more especially to all forms of literature expressing personal emotion and to all religious books and/

1. J.L. Palmer, The Hesperides, p. 129-30.

and symbols."¹ So, not unnaturally, among the Hesperides, imagination and esthetic feeling have gone. They have no curiosity, and, having no imagination, are quite fearless. Unfortunately, their lack of imagination means that they have no sense of humour either. "Old evils returning fast," exclaims a shocked Member of the Supreme Governors, at a meeting. "Humour is committed even at this High Table."

If Huxley and Kendal constructed "counter"-utopias to point out where humanity seemed to be going, and Palmer used satire, Herbert Read, in The Green Child, 1935, chose an escapist utopia as a means of turning his back on his own age. A.L. Morton comments: "It is perhaps, unfair to couple with such degraded books² (Huxley's Ape and Essence and Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-four) Herbert Read's The Green Child (1935) yet in this brilliant, innocent romance the retreat from the complete reality of the contemporary world is already strongly marked. --- Read, like his hero, longs for order and beauty. He hopes to find these, first in the pastoral simplicity of his South American Utopia, but fails, and, following the significant image of the stream/

1. J.L. Palmer, The Hesperides, pp. 69-70.

2. A.L. Morton, as a good Marxist, judges all utopian fiction according to its attitude to class struggle and revolution - a set of values that sometimes implies a rather one-sided attitude to the offending authors.

stream flowing backward to its source, discovers them finally in an unhuman race to whom death is the highest form of being. -- It is a vision that holds little hope for the future, but it is not an ignoble vision like those of Huxley and Orwell."¹ There may also be something of the urge for structure that makes some artists turn to non-figurative art behind lines like the following, for one must not forget that on the Continent Read is widely known as an art critic. "All that is misty and fluid, all that is soft and labile, falls, precipitates, returns to the chaos of unformed matter; but out of the same chaos is slowly formed all that is finite and solid, all that is hard and eternal, all that is fixed and harmonious. This harmony exists before life and after life; in worlds that are not yet formed and in worlds that are defunct, cold and extinct. Such harmony is the harmony of the universe as well as the harmony of the crystal; my only desire is to become a part of that harmony obeying in my frame its immutable laws and proportions."²

However different all these utopian authors are, they have one thing in common: they all refuse to accept only material progress, quantitative values. None of them is optimistic in the way H.G. Wells had been, before the Great War, /

1. A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 208-09.
2. H. Read, The Green Child, p. 194.

War, or even in the rather more sober way of Charlotte Haldane. However, optimism thrives even in the most unlikely conditions: one finds its almost pathetic to come across sentences like "Die Welt wird trotz allem verständigiger von Tag zu Tag," especially in a book called Grenzenloser Optimismus, published in Prague in 1939.

One work, After Us, or The World as it might be, published in 1936 by J.P. Lockhart - Mummery, is once more grandly and colossally optimistic - a Winwood Reade in slightly modernised form. The book contains two parts; a series of essays and then the utopia proper, in the shape of a diary, written by a Mrs. Armstrong on a visit to London II in 2456. The former part is, however, more interesting, and a few quotations will show its surprising optimism: "At the present day scientific knowledge is taking the place of the old guesswork methods of breeding. It is known that life-forms themselves can be altered permanently by X-rays and by chemical action. Controlled evolution of plants and animals opens up extraordinary possibilities of improving the world."¹ - "Why should a falling birth-rate be disastrous? Do we want to be more overcrowded? --- We want better children, not more children."²/

1. J.P. Lockhart, - Mummery, After Us, p. 26.
 2. do. do. do. p. 37.

children." - "Man's physique and vigour will be improved, his mental capacity greatly increased, and as knowledge increases the improvement will be more rapid and the mistakes fewer."¹ One way of avoiding "mistakes" is a wholesale sterilisation of almost all male children and then artificial insemination. Much emphasis is given to psychology and education: "The Science of psychology has been developed very greatly and has found perhaps its greatest triumphs in this direction. It is much easier and better to prevent the formation of undesirable complexes in the human mind than to attempt to eradicate them once they are established."²

In this self-contained utopia run on scientific, communistic lines, where women work as well as men and all wages are paid through the State Bank, where problems of traffic and town-planning are equally well solved, there is no room for religion. Man becomes his own god: "Man does not die, he goes on to better and better things, to attain greater heights and acquire greater knowledge of himself and all creation. Individuals pass off the stage, but man should be immortal and our ideal should be to make him so, and to help, however little, to make him one day what we think he should be."³

1. J.P. Lockhart-Mummery, After Us, p. 49.
2. do. do. do. p. 132.
3. do. do. do. p. 148.

CHAPTER VII.

The 1930's had seen the first specimens of what is the most interesting phenomenon in utopian fiction in the twentieth century, namely anti-utopias like those of Huxley and Kendal. In these two works the form of the old classical utopia is maintained, but the contents are changed into the representation of something diametrically opposite to an ideal commonwealth. Instead of presenting an example to be followed they give "awful warnings." This new use of an old form continues in the Forties, which can be regarded as the period of "anti-utopias," as, not unexpectedly, World War II gave this type of utopian fiction a deeper significance. Compared with Ape and Essence and Nineteen Eighty-four the "anti-utopias" of the thirties seem almost desirable. The warning has become much more awful as well as more urgent. The first World War had been a bad shock, but the second made everybody realise the potentialities of evil in man - not only in certain nations or groups but in human beings as such. The atomic bomb brought home the possibilities of destruction that science had given to man. Fear and helplessness are the dominating feelings, and Julian Huxley aptly sums up the/
the/

the situation for the Western World: "Our thinking is chaotic, our nerves are jumpy, we are a prey to pessimism and depression, we seem frightened of our human selves. Our half of the world lacks a common faith; the other half has had imposed upon it a dogmatic faith which can never satisfy free men. We in the West have lost our sense of continuity, our long-term hope, and seem only able to concentrate on prospects of immediate disaster or immediate methods of escaping from it. Never was there greater need for a large perspective, in which we might discern the outlines of a general and continuing belief beyond the disturbance and chaos of the present."¹

When Aldous Huxley presented his brave new world in 1932, it had been directed against "the welfare-tyranny of Utopia." In it, science, like everything else, had been controlled in the interest of stability. Knowledge and truth are too dangerous as ideals - they must be subordinated to the interests of the State. In Ape and Essence, 1948, we are shown the effects of science uncontrolled: the suicide of our civilization. In this second warning there is no detachment in the author's attitude; instead of irony there is brutality, and the will to frighten mankind back to sanity.

The/

1. J. Huxley, New Bottles for New Wine, p. 245.

The loss of detachment, however, has also meant a loss of artistic finish. Instead of the beautifully simple construction of Brave New World, Huxley uses the complicated device of a frame-story to explain the finding of the rejected film-script and the search for its deceased author, William Tallis. The script itself moves rapidly from scene to scene, with the voice of the Narrator commenting, now in verse, now in prose; and the camera sweeps from broad surveys to close-ups, and sometimes gives us a glimpse of the audience: well-dressed baboons of all ages...

"The Camera moves across a narrow no-man's-land of rubble, broken trees and corpses, and comes to rest on a second group of animals, wearing different decorations and under another flag, but with the same Dr. Albert Einstein, on an exactly similar string, squatting at the heels of their jack-boots."¹ After an agony of hesitation the scientists let loose destruction and the Camera swoops down to a close shot of dead baboons, charred trees, and the two Einsteins, horribly disfigured by burns; as the pus-coloured poison gas reaches them, "a choking scream announces the death, by suicide, of twentieth-century science."

However,/

1. A. Huxley, Ape and Essence, p. 40.

However, after this prologue we learn that certain parts of the world were not worth destroying and after the radio active effects have begun to wear off, an expedition sets out in 2108 from New Zealand to rediscover America. "Such nice people! And the civilization they represent - thats nice too; --- No heights or abysses, but plenty of milk for the kids and a reasonably high average I Q, and everything, in a quiet provincial way, thoroughly cosy and sensible and humane."¹ A young scientist, Dr. Poole, is captured by the survivors of World War III, called "the Thing," who now live among the ruins of what once was Los Angeles. Having only just escaped being buried alive he finds himself in a strange world: the effects of Gamma rays on heredity have produced a high percentage of mutations, with sterility or monsters as the result. Religion has turned into devil-worship, food is scarce, and the population is thrown back on stripping the twentieth-century corpses for clothes and the public libraries for fuel. Women are regarded as "vessels of Unholiness" and very harshly treated. One of the mutations has resulted in human rutting seasons - one a year. For the remaining fifty weeks everybody must respect the five red patches with/

1. A. Huxley, Ape and Essence, pp. 47-48.

with the word NO that the "vessels" wear. The following year, as an introduction to the orgies, babies below the accepted standards of deformity are sacrificed on Belial's altar and their mothers whipped. A severe punishment is inflicted on those who "throw back to the old-style mating pattern." During the period when all government is suspended, the Church takes over, and smooth-faced, squeaky priests watch over the rites. "Awe-inspiring in their chasubles of Anglo-Nubian fur, in their tiaras of gilded horns, Patriarchs and Archimandrites, Presbyters and Postulants stand in two groups at the head of the altar steps, chanting antiphonally in a high treble to the music of bone recorders and a battery of xylophones:

Glory to Belial,

To Belial in the Lowest...."¹

Accompanied by the screams of the whipped women the Arch-Vicar explains the new order of things to Dr. Poole.

"As I read history', he says, 'it's like this. Man pitting himself against Nature, the Ego against the Order of Things, Belial against the Other One...' After a long period of hesitation the Devil has his way." ...Up goes the spiral of industry, down goes the spiral of soil fertility. Bigger and better, richer and more powerful - and then almost/

1. A. Huxley, Ape and Essence, p. 108.

almost suddenly, hungrier and hungrier. Yes, Belial foresaw it all - the passage from hunger to imported food, from imported food to booming population and from booming population back to hunger again. Back to hunger. The New Hunger, the Higher Hunger, the hunger of enormous industrialized proletariats, the hunger of city dwellers with money, with all the modern conveniences, with cars and radios and every imaginable gadget, the hunger that is the cause of total wars and the total wars that are the cause of yet more hunger."¹ And after "the Thing" there exists this mad, bad world with its deformed population and no prospects of a better future, only worse deformity and complete extinction.

Dr. Poole, an expert on plant disease, is working in the skeleton-strewn laboratory "in which the sophomores of the University of Southern California once pursued the study of Elementary Biology," but there is no time for him to carry out his schemes on soil fertility - he falls in love and is obliged to escape with the girl across the desert into the north.

Most critics have been so stunned by the horrors that Huxley makes the readers go through, that they have either missed the significance of this episode or else found it impossible/

1. A. Huxley, Ape and Essence, p. 123.

impossible to assimilate a "happy end" to the rest of Ape and Essence. Apart from the horrors that Huxley lavishly scatters all through the book, its complicated structure with film-script and frame-story and the two lovers accidentally finding William Tallis's grave on their flight through the desert, is difficult to disentangle. It is not surprising that Huxley's feelings of disgust for the Yahoo-baboons should make one blind to passages like the following: " 'And whenever evil is carried to the limit, it always destroys itself. After which the Order of Things comes to the surface again.' 'But that's far away in the future.' 'For the whole world, yes. But not for single individuals, not for you and me, for example. Whatever Belial may have done with the rest of the world, you and I can always work with the Order of Things, not against it.'"¹

This dialogue between the two lovers is important; and its importance is underlined by that Narrator's comments on the accompanying music, which "...transcends the Romantic integration of the tragic and the joyful, the human and the daemonic. And when, in the darkness, the lover's voice whispers again of ' a mortal form indued
 With love and life and light and deity,'

is/

1. A. Huxley, Ape and Essence, pp. 197-98.

is there already the beginning of an understanding that beyond Epipsychidion there is Adonais and beyond Adonais, the wordless doctrine of the Pure in Heart?"¹

Undoubtedly, in Ape and Essence, the individual is given the third alternative that did not exist in Brave New World - that of sanity in a world of madness. But it is also evident that Huxley considers this as a "rather rare phenomenon." So the horrors and nightmares are emphasized to frighten us off the road to destruction, to stop us from blowing our world to bits. And Huxley has succeeded in making his anti-utopia so gruesome that he finds himself in the ironical position of having scared his readers so badly that they cannot even see the possibility he holds out to them.

As emerges quite plainly from the above, there is a great difference in attitude between Brave New World and Ape and Essence. Although they are both "inverted" utopias, there is in the former book the detached, faintly amused attitude of a man who wants to make an interesting experiment. There is nothing inherently wrong with ideas of social stability, technical and scientific progress and general happiness; but what happens if you build a community/

1. A. Huxley, Ape and Essence, p. 199.

community on them, and deliberately leave out on spiritual values? Brave New World is the answer: you get your healthy, bright, streamlined "air-conditioned nightmare," definitely sub-human. But to repudiate it for loneliness, brooding and suicide as the Savage chooses to do, is only another form of madness - that is what the experiment amounts to. As an artistic experiment it is eminently successful - as a warning perhaps less so.

Because of that Huxley, who was "not interested in books about the future" had to write another. This time the warning is urgent and unmistakable, for in the meantime man had been given the means of literally blowing up his world. In Ape and Essence there is no distance between the author and his work, no attempt to stand aside and let the audience admire an elegant demonstration. The frightening process laid bare in this anti-utopia is man's regress from civilization: progress reversed. For civilized man there is no going back to primitivism or the state of the noble savage, only to barbarism, utterly degraded and corrupt. It is our tragedy that when the essence of humanity is gone, the ape remains. For as man advanced from primitivism to civilization he had to pay a high price for mind and spirit: the loss of intuition, of emotional spontaneity, of instincts. In Huxley's earlier books - Point/

Point Counter Point is probably the best example - one meets the problems of overcivilization in various forms, but in Ape and Essence he no longer bothers with problems of balance and adjustment. The question is: can man stop destroying himself? Is there a way out of this lunacy back to sanity? The surprising thing is that Huxley, as well as Forster, holds out the hope of a new beginning. Huxley even goes a step farther; in his book one finds the desperate hope that the catastrophe may perhaps be averted, if only the warning can be made awful enough.

In 1948, when Huxley's Ape and Essence was published, George Orwell was fighting with his personal nightmare, Nineteen eighty-four. It was published in 1949, the year before Orwell's death, and it must be remembered that it is the work of a sick man. We do not yet, however, know enough about Eric Blair to be able to explain why George Orwell wrote the book he did, and the inner reason can only be guessed at. One thing emerges very clearly: he never recovered from his education. He was the poor but brilliant boy who was forced at his prep. school and won a scholarship for Eton. But so did Cyril Connolly, who knew him at "St. Wulfric's" and has given a portrait of Eric Blair/

Blair in those days.¹ Evidently they both felt like outsiders among the sons of wealthy parents, and in Orwell's case the reaction was violent but somehow adolescent. He refused to take advantage of his expensive education - in fact, he blamed it for having ruined him. This resentment may have prevented him from growing up emotionally, if remaining a kind of chronic conscientious objector can be regarded as a form of adolescence. A careful reading of Nineteen eighty-four and its horrors reveals sometimes a frightened adolescent and sometimes a frightened child.

"Do you begin to see, then what kind of world we are creating? It is the exact opposite of the stupid hedonistic Utopias that the old reformers imagined. A world of fear... If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face - for ever."² Like Huxley, Orwell has written a "Utopia" where the fictitious journey and/

1. "I was a stage rebel, Orwell a true one. Tall, pale, with his flaccid cheeks, and a matter-of-fact, supercilious voice, he was one of those boys who seem born old. He was incapable of courtship, and when his favour went, it went for ever. He saw through St. Wulfric's, despised Sambo and hated Flip, but was valuable to them as scholarship fodder. --- The remarkable thing about Orwell was that he alone among the boys, was an intellectual and not a parrot, for he thought for himself, read Shaw and Samuel Butler, and rejected not only St. Wulfric's, but the war, the Empire, Kipling, Sussex, and Character."

C. Connolly, Enemies of Promise, pp. 212-213.

2. G. Orwell, Nineteen eighty-four, pp. 267-68.

and the visitor from our world are superfluous. The journey is in time, not space, and this time it is a short one, for the catastrophe is near. Another generation has brought it on. Again, the setting is London; but not a sunny summer London but a London as cold, dreary, miserable and dirty as it appears on a bleak March day. The man who is different, Winston Smith, is just as unimpressive, though the fact that he is still an individual is remarkable enough in this world of mass hysteria. Just as Brave New World is artistically superior to Ape and Essence because Huxley kept aloof, so Nineteen eighty-four shows the disadvantages of an author who is too involved in his own nightmare world. For when the reader has recovered from the many pages of horror the question-marks begin to take shape in his mind.

The outlines of the new world are clear enough: it is divided between three great powers: Eurasia, Eastasia, and Oceania, the last comprising America and the British Isles, now called Airstrip One. These great powers all exist as perfectly separate entities, with no contacts between them except those of war and alliance. Perpetual warfare is necessary to maintain the ruling party/

party in power - the dangers from without, as well as the "traitors" and "spies" within, allow an outlet for the hatred which is the only legitimate feeling, apart from loyalty to the Party. Life is carried on at a level of general fear, hatred and distrust. "The tele-screen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time."¹ This is very much the opposite of a classless society; the pattern reminds one of that of the Soviet Union. There are the Inner Party, the Outer Party and the "proles," the latter comprising 85 percent of the population. The symbol of the Party is Big Brother, whose face stares from hoardings and whose voice is heard on the tele-screen but who has never been seen.

After the rise, and, in some cases, the fall of totalitarian states it is not surprising that the problems connected/

1. G. Orwell, Nineteen eighty-four, pp. 6-7.

connected with unlimited power should attract writers. Rex Warner is one example: The Aerodrome is the story of disciplined military power set against a civilian way of life, and Men of Stones deals with the problem of absolute, godlike power embodied in one man. Orwell, however, is fascinated by another aspect of the matter, that of collective power. He was, after all, an adherent of the anti-Stalinist left-wing of the British Labour Party. Although the thirty pages of Goldstein's book, Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism are somewhat clumsily integrated with the rest it is nevertheless one of the most interesting parts of Nineteen Eighty-four. It is a kind of blueprint of the workings of a totalitarian state, led by a group of people who are determined to remain in power and who have made it possible to enforce complete obedience. "The problem, that is to say, is educational. It is a problem of continuously moulding the consciousness both of the directing group and of the larger executive group that lies immediately below it. The consciousness of the masses needs only to be influenced in a negative way."¹ And we know that this is perfectly possible to do. Part of the nightmare quality of Orwell's world is its reality, its being an intensified version of things that have/

1. G. Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-four, p. 209.

have already begun to exist. Double-think, "the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accepting them both, and Newspeak, the artificial language that would make even a heretical thought impossible, are two ways of shaping the minds of the Party members.¹ There are of course others, less subtle, dealt with by the Thought Police.

One of Orwell's obsessions is the falsification of the past that is continually carried out in the Ministry of Truth. Every day Winston Smith and thousands of other men are busy "correcting" the records of the past, bringing newspapers and books into accordance with the statements of Big Brother. The myth of the infallibility of the Party is supposed to make this complicated and rather uncanny process necessary, but like Winston Smith one wonders why, and is not prepared to accept the analogy of sentences like: "This day-to-day falsification of the past, carried out by the Ministry of Truth, is as necessary to the stability of the regime as the work of repression and/

1. The idea of moulding man's ideas by speech (the words used) is of course not new in utopian fiction. Sveven has an amusing version of "double-talk", "a language so ambiguous and difficult that it takes the greatest wits to manage it." The word for 'good' also means 'feeble' or 'silly', that for 'vice' also means 'pleasure' etc. and the correct shade of meaning is conveyed by complicated and subtle use of intonation. (Limanora, p. 31-32) But Orwell is the first to see the frightening possibilities.

and espionage carried out by the Ministry of Love."¹ But the reader's objections are not on the intellectual plane; they are on the emotional. As long as Orwell builds up the general atmosphere of fear and distrust, of shabbiness and disintegration, of unappetising food and synthetic gin, bad soap and leaking drains, he is very successful. His shortcomings only appear when he is obliged to introduce personal relationships, for there immaturity is harder to conceal. Orwell shares with Huxley a dislike and nausea of the human body that is almost Swiftian, but unfortunately his taste for melodrama spoils the artistic effect. "The schoolboy quality" of the horrors, for instance, has been pointed out by a reviewer in the Times Literary Supplement for June 10, 1949, but I think that one misses something important if one dismisses them as "comic." Whatever their effect on the reader, they had a deep fascination for the author, and the prolonged, disgustingly detailed torture scenes remind one of a child that has worked itself into a fit of hysterics and cannot snap out of it. Winston Smith's reactions are typical of this. His feelings for O'Brien, whom he takes for a friend but who is a member of the Thought Police, have the quality of a schoolboy/

1. G. Orwell, Nineteen eighty-four, p. 214.

schoolboy crush, brought out unexpectedly even in the torture scenes: "The pain was already half-forgotten. He opened his eyes and looked up gratefully at O'Brien. At the sight of the heavy, lined face, so ugly and so intelligent, his heart seemed to turn over. If he could have moved, he would have stretched out a hand and laid it on O'Brien's arm."¹ There is also a strong element of cruelty in Winston Smith's feelings for Julia. During the Two Minutes' Hatred, he manages to transfer his hatred of Goldstein, the traitor, to the then unknown girl. "He would flog her to death with a rubber truncheon. He would tie her naked to a stake"² etc.

This lack of balance between intellectual and emotional values in Nineteen Eighty-four leaves the reader dissatisfied and puzzled, but it must not be allowed to obscure the importance of the book. For in spite of - and sometimes because of - its being the work of a sick man, it is the complete anti-utopia, hell on earth, doomed to go on for ever. There is no way out, for the Party is immortal and ruthless, obsessed by the lust for power: "Always we shall have the heretic here at our mercy, screaming with pain, broken up, contemptible - and in the end utterly penitent,/"

1. G. Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-four, p. 253.

2. do. do. p. 18.

penitent, saved from himself, crawling to our feet of his own accord. That is the world that we are preparing, Winston. A world of victory after victory, triumph after triumph after triumph an endless pressing, pressing, pressing upon the nerve of power."¹

Obsession with the problems of power is, perhaps, only what might be expected during this period; and I am going to deal briefly with Rex Warner, who, ever since The Wild Goose Chase was published in 1937, has been fascinated by another aspect of this particular problem: the effect of power on those who wield it, as well as on those who have to submit. His approach is both intellectual and emotional: The Cult of Power, 1946, contains an interesting analysis of our time and of what kind of a state the forces that we see at work will eventually produce. He points out that the revolt against religion and other established values inevitably leads the rebel to set himself up as an authority: "There is only one thing for it - after having rejected God to make himself God and to cause it to be generally believed that those characteristics by which he won his first eminence - and perhaps these have been self-assertion, violence, brutality, amongst others - are the characteristics of Godhead."² He traces the road "from the/

1. G. Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-four, p. 269.
2. R. Warner, The Cult of Power, pp. 12-13.

the intellectual sceptic to the power-addict, from the power-addict to the 'leader',"¹ and he also illustrated this process in its ultimate form: that of the individual claiming to be divine. I have chosen Men of Stones, 1949, as an example rather than any of his other books, not because it is a better book - I don't think it is - but because it best illustrates this particular aspect of leadership. It is typical of the restive atmosphere of the period, appearing in the same year as Nineteen Eighty-four, and bearing the sub-title "A Melodrama." In fact, it could also have been called an allegory. However, the story is not important; the significant thing about this book is that it shows the effect of power on the main character, the Prison Governor. A quotation will bring out this as well as Warner's own attitude: "The Governor continued: 'I model myself rather upon God the Father than upon God the Son. The actions of the Father are often unpredictable and often seem to us unjust. They are always powerful and overwhelming. His children are most happy when they are most utterly in submission to His will. Indeed, the most profitable lesson which we can draw from the life and ministry of the Son is this perfect submission to a will which, though not understood, is accepted and which,/"

1. R. Warner, The Cult of Power, pp. 12-13.

which, though by our standards unjust, is known to be righteous. There are many religions which I might have adapted to my purpose, in particular, perhaps, some of the religions of central America. However, the Christian religion is that one, which, though it has been responsible for much harm and much hypocrisy, is best known to the most advanced nations of the world, and is capable, with very little alteration, of forming the basis of a modern and lasting faith. I should be the last to say that a religion should be judged entirely, or chiefly, by the effect it has on the happiness of the masses. However, it is worth noting that, at the present critical state of the world, absolute faith and absolute obedience is exactly what the masses are seeking for. What they cannot bear is to be told, as they constantly are being told by ignorant enthusiasts or pompous educationists, that it is their duty to think. The average man, if he were not misled from his earliest school days, would have sufficient modesty to admit that he is incapable of thought, except at a very low level. Free meals would mean something to him: free thought is simply a burden. What he needs is security - physical and mental, for the two must go together. Indeed, of the two, mental or spiritual security is/
is/

is by far the most important. Once men become capable again of believing blindly and unquestioningly that the will of their government is the will of heaven, that, in fact, their governors are, in some sense, gods, then there is some hope that the world may escape destruction and that peace and goodwill may reign, for the first time, on earth."¹ However, the book ends with the downfall of the Prison Governor, followed by civil war, apparently without much hope of a better world being established.

From these works one turns with a mixture of relief and surprise to Viscount Samuel's An Unknown Land, published in 1942 but "planned and largely written before the war."² It is a most unexpected work to come across in any period after 1850, but in the 1940's it is utterly freakish; an attempt at reviving the classical utopia of the Renaissance. It has all the outer characteristics of the genre; it is a utopia in space, not in time; its alleged author is an English gentleman who searches for an unknown island (Francis Bacon's Bensalem); he is shipwrecked and finds himself in a new and better world. Bensalem is peopled by a much improved type of human being who have kept in touch with the world by means of "Mission ships", but who have not allowed any foreign influence on their own way of life, /

1. R. Warner, Men of Stones, pp. 52-53.
2. A.L. Morton, The English Utopia, p. 203.

life, except in unimportant details, as "world conditions of the present age did not tempt them to change it." What makes them so superior is the size of their brains - the skull is artificially enlarged to give room for a bigger brain - and they live in a rationally organised society. "Almost every advance that we have made," he said, "is the result of research, deliberately undertaken and carefully planned; we know what we want and we work till we get it."¹ This is a society without class-distinctions, without money, with very little government, founded on the family as the basic institution. Working-hours are very short. Material progress is secondary to spiritual; Bensalem is a Christian country, deeply religious.

, For all its interesting details, this utopia somehow does not come off - perhaps because one meets so many of the devices of the classical utopia that one regards it rather as a pastiche than a serious work. And yet it has not been possible for the author to shut out his own time: "A description of Bensalem, even though it were taken for nothing more than another Imaginary Commonwealth, might be found by some people a stimulus, and perhaps in these times a solace as well. In a troubled, anxious and dangerous age, even a mere Utopia may help to lessen pessimism and to/

1. Viscount Samuel, An Unknown Land, pp. 37-38.

to encourage that untiring effort which alone can mitigate existing evils and ward off further dangers."¹ So even in this last effort at a classical utopia we do not escape the warning note, nor are we allowed to forget that "further dangers" await us; it is not, after all, a case of "full circle."

1. Viscount Samuel, An Unknown Land, p. 210.

CHAPTER VIII.

A survey of utopian fiction from 1850 to 1950 shows, as any period of a hundred years would, distinct differences between the early works of the period and the later ones, not only in detail but in general outlook, but as the social and political background, against which utopias must be regarded, changed so rapidly during these hundred years, no other period shows more clearly how the way in which they develop, depends on the social conditions of the times; a fact which makes the individual exception to the general trend all the more noticeable.

So many of the nineteenth century utopias concerned themselves with material and technical progress that this attitude alone dates them as early specimens. For in later utopias we find a lack of interest in technology as such; instead they occupy themselves with man and his possibilities of remaining human in a modern collectivistic type of society. The revaluation of many things which the early utopians regarded as pure blessings - leisure, for instance - is another distinction between the nineteenth century utopias and those of the anti-utopia type. There are also purely technical differences. In the classical utopias several chapters/

chapters are normally devoted to the journey to Utopia, or to the other devices by which the author introduced the necessary stranger from another world, whereas in the more important later ones, like Huxley's Brave New World and Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-four, the reader finds himself in the imaginary world straight from the beginning. Incidentally, at the same time as the contemporary novel becomes less realistic, utopian fiction becomes more so; the anti-utopias, having a very urgent message to convey, generally avoid the too fantastic. Part of the horror of Nineteen Eighty-four is its realism: the use of frightening tendencies of our time carried just a little further.

The conception of an ideal existence on earth is an old one in the history of mankind - the Golden Age, the Earthly Paradise, Millennium, Schlaraffenland are all examples of this kind of wishful thinking. Utopias mingle the practicable with the fairytale according to the time in which they were created, but also according to the personal whims of the story-teller. Sometimes they reflect their period rather than their author's personality, but the interaction between these two factors must never be forgotten. Incidentally, this double perspective of an age seen through an individual can sometimes give a sudden interest to an otherwise/

otherwise insignificant work.

On the whole, up to 1914 utopias were mainly concerned with material progress. They were technical and scientific forecasts, optimistic projections into the future, based on the presumption that if everybody could have enough of everything we would all be happy. "Victorian optimism," that vague but useful phrase, expresses much that is typical in these utopias. Some writers did react against the social injustices and the ugliness of an industrial age, but enthusiasts like Winwood Reade managed to lend a certain splendour to what most people would have regarded as the seamy side of this age. His ideas of London are very different from those of Hay and Jefferies: "This great and glorious city in which we dwell, this mighty London, the metropolis of the earth; these streets flowing with eager-minded life, and gleaming with prodigious wealth; these forests of masts, these dark buildings, turning refuse into gold, and giving bread to many thousand mouths; these harnessed elements which whirl us along beneath the ground, and which soon will convey us through the air...."¹

In the early utopias of the period comparatively little interest is given to questions of government, and the conception/

1. W. Reade, The Martyrdom of Man, p. 494.

conception of the state is much vaguer than in the later ones. There is a general belief in human perfectibility and goodwill, and an optimistic faith that there were no other factors to be reckoned with. One is often reminded of Viscount Samuel's summary of government in Bensalem: "It seemed to me that the country was run more like a Pall Mall Club than anything else."¹ This is the general optimistic attitude in Reade's forecast: "--- it may fairly be asserted that the government of this country is as nearly perfect as any government can be."² Even in an early "Socialist" utopia, like Hay's Three Hundred Years Hence, the following passage covers the question of government: "Happy for the Race that the instincts of Nature brought about the birth and growth of Socialism, which relieved him from those oppressions that constrained his Reason, and enabled him to develop nobler and better political thought."³ It is natural that "back-to-Nature" utopias and Lord Lytton's The Coming Race should not need elaborate systems of government, for they are all founded on small communities. Neither Jefferies' tribes nor Hudson's "Houses" scattered over the earth, need anything at all complicated; Lord Lytton's Vril-ya, too, live in a patriarchal type of society. However, The Coming Race contains a few thrusts at American Democracy, which are obviously meant/

1. Viscount Samuel, An Unknown Land, p. 71.

2. W. Reade, The Martyrdom of Man, p. 509.

3. W. Hay, Three Hundred Years Hence, p. 328.

meant for the home market, as Lord Lytton was no longer a Radical when this book was written.

Not until Morris wrote News from Nowhere in 1890 is there a utopian work of fiction which seriously discusses Socialist - Communist problems, and accepts a civil war and a social revolution as necessary before a new and better society can be built. Morris regarded a complete break with the old order as inevitable. However, the kind of society he looked forward to was very different from the type of state that Communism for instance has since actually created. Nothing could be less bureaucratic than the organic community, founded on common interests and common work, which he presents in News from Nowhere: "there is no longer anything which you, a native of another planet, would call a government."¹

The idea of a planned World State, highly efficient and highly bureaucratic, which H.G. Wells introduces, first as a frightening possibility in 1899,² but from 1901 onwards as a most desirable arrangement, is something new in this period; the classical, carefully planned utopias had all been small communities. Wells's World State is based on the assumption of technical progress and improving communications, as has been shown more fully in Chapter IV. Up to 1940, when The New World Order appeared, he was a spokesman for the same/

1.W. Morris, News from Nowhere, p. 105.

2. See When the Sleeper Wakes.

same kind of Socialist World State, run not by the masses but for them, by a leading group. As the following quotations show, there was not much change in his conceptions after the First World War, and the rise of the totalitarian states did not seem to have made much impression either: "What is plain to me is that the modern world-state which was a mere dream in 1900, is to-day a practicable objective; it is indeed the only sane political objective for a reasonable man..."¹

In 1940 he still insisted that we must "create a collectivisation that will be more efficient, more prosperous, tolerant, free and rapidly progressive than the system we condemn."²

In fact, the main difference between the "New Republicanism" of 1901 and "Western-spirited Collectivism" in 1940 is that Wells had found it necessary to point out that, as long as men were still "childishly wicked," the individual might have to be protected against the officiousness of civil servants and the like. See further Chapter IV, page 87 .

Although Wells in the Preface to When the Sleeper Awakes, 1921, draws attention to Belloc's The Servile State, and the similarities between the two books, he does not seem to have/

1. H.G. Wells, Autobiography, p. 751.

Compare also similar passages in The Shape of Things to Come, 1933, pp. 405ff.

2. H.G. Wells, The New World Order, p. 80.

have let himself be at all influenced by Belloc's notions of the worker as a slave in his later works.

While H.G. Wells was still advocating the planned World State, practical experiments in large-scale totalitarian government had actually been carried out. Partly as a result of these experiments we have a series of "anti-utopias", in which the repudiation of the totalitarian state grows stronger. Kendal represented his benevolent welfare state as first turning into something merely oppressive, stifling the initiative of the individual and making him unsatisfied: "Haven't we every advantage life can offer, peace, health, abundance, comfort, knowledge, art, and yet"¹ Then, as the story unfolds itself, the implicit tyranny is brought out. Aldous Huxley treated this problem in another way: the inhabitants of the Brave New World are so well-conditioned that there is no risk of their not conforming to the approved pattern of behaviour. "The world's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get."² This way of solving the relations between an all-powerful state and its citizens is so far the most sophisticated in utopian fiction, because it is so smooth and efficient and yet, to some people, opens up a vista of a/

1.J. Kendal, Unborn To-Morrow, p. 33.

2.A. Huxley, Brave New World, p. 180.

a vast prison. "World Control" has been made possible by standardising emotions and minds. In Palmer's satire Peter Wykeham, the man who travelled to Hesperus, muses on the fate of the Hesperides: "I have seen a strange race in rebellion against its fetish - setting out at the eleventh hour to recover its freedom when the discipline of community was like to destroy it. Freedom and governance - liberty and control. Must they go ding-dong down the ages, antinomies not to be reconciled?"¹ The idea of a state-controlled existence as a kind of prison, which is so discreetly conveyed in Huxley's Brave New World, is very forcibly brought out in Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-four a book in which fear and hatred of what the totalitarian state might do to destroy the individual reaches its highest pitch. From the benevolent Welfare State of the earlier utopias we have moved straight into the Police State: a development which must be seen against the contemporary political situation. Orwell is much closer to actual events than even Huxley was in Ape and Essence.

In most utopias after 1850 scientific and technical progress plays an important part, whether the author accepts the shape things are taking or not. The difference between what might be done with the enormous resources that applied science/

1. J. Palmer, The Hesperides, p. 318.

science was placing at man's disposal, and what was actually being done, is probably one of the reasons why there are so many "scientifically progressive" utopias after the middle of the century. Apart from Butler and the naturalists, there is an almost universal acceptance of scientific progress, regarded not only as inevitable but actually as a good thing. Winwood Reade gives a striking example of this point of view: "Thus Man has taken into his service and modified to his use, the animals, the plants, the earths, and the stones, the waters and the winds, and the more complex forces of heat, electricity, sunlight, magnetism, with chemical powers of many kinds. By means of his intentions and discoveries, by means of the arts and trades, and by means of the industry resulting from them, he has raised himself from the condition of a serf to the condition of a lord. His triumph, indeed, is incomplete; his kingdom is not yet come. --- Earth, which is now a purgatory, will be made a paradise, not by idle prayers and supplications, but by the efforts of man himself, and by means of mental achievements analogous to those which have raised him to his present state. Those inventions and discoveries, which have made him, by the grace of God, king of the animals, Lord of the elements, and/

and sovereign of steam and electricity, were all of them founded on experiment and observation. We can conquer nature only by obeying her laws, and in order to obey her laws we must first learn what they are. When we have ascertained, by means of Science, the methods of nature's operations, we shall be able to take her place and to perform them for ourselves."¹

It is natural enough that much interest should be given to detailed descriptions of wonderful machinery and technical inventions in the early utopias of the period: airships, submarines and diving-bells large enough to hold a city on the bottom of the sea in Hay's Three Hundred Years Hence; airships "like an enormous egg" in Craig's Ionia, where nothing but electricity is used for light and heating, and the houses have aluminium floors; ships driven by liquid air in Shiel's The Purple Cloud; mono-rails, television etc. in Wells's numerous utopias - the examples could be multiplied ad infinitum, especially if one studied Wells who is the last important utopian writer to show an excessive delight in gadgets. This line was taken over by science fiction, which may be one of the reasons why serious authors lost interest in technical fantasies - another/

1. W. Reade, The Martyrdom of Man, pp. 512-13.

another may be that it was found that, after all, life had not been so radically changed by the results of applied science and technics as might have been expected. For although most of the inventions that Wells predicted at the turn of the century have come into existence fifty years before he thought they would, large-scale distribution of them seems to be fifty years behind his schedule. Nor have they added to man's happiness, as the early utopians thought they would, even when they are within the reach of everybody. These views had been criticised by authors like E.M. Forster before the First World War, and one very rarely comes across a really streamlined utopia like Lockhart-Mummery's After Us after 1920, unless it is also an anti-utopia like Huxley's Brave New World.¹

After the turn of the century and very markedly so after the First World War, biology and psychology take the place formerly given to the old physical sciences. The early utopians had changed society for the better and had expected mankind to change automatically within it.

Darwinism, with its emphasis on the importance of environment, provided/

1. Conceptions of the scientist as a potential danger to humanity have become very common after the 1920's, especially in sub-literary fiction where he is often represented as a sinister power, or an evil influence.

provided new scientific support for these notions and is probably one of the reasons why so many nineteenth century utopias have this basic conception. With the new light that Mendel's discoveries had thrown on heredity, the study of psychology, and two World Wars with all that they implied, this optimistic belief was difficult to uphold. So we find that interest is switched over from the outer world and focussed on man. This attitude is summed up by Sir Julian Huxley: "We have pretty well finished the geographical exploration of the earth; we have pushed the scientific exploration of nature, both lifeless and living, to a point, at which its main outlines have become clear; but the exploration of human nature and its possibilities have scarcely begun."¹ Education, like marriage, is one of the problems that utopian writers generally deal with; from Pemberton to Orwell we find varying forms of educational systems and institutions, with occasional advocates of no education at all, like Morris and Blatchford. In anti-utopias schools are one means of moulding the children, and in Nineteen Eighty-four children are trained to watch their parents for signs of unorthodoxy. "Nearly all children nowadays were horrible."² However, interest in man has become far more biological than educational in later/

1. Sir Julian Huxley, New Bottles for New Wine, p.14.

2. G. Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-four, p. 27.

later utopias; many twentieth century utopias even seem to regard mankind as so much raw-material for eugenics carried out on a grand scale. The idea of a healthier, more intelligent and generally superior race being purposely bred on scientific lines is a fairly late notion. Tonia is one of the earliest utopias to pay attention to eugenics, and naturally Craig's approach is much less scientific than that of a surgeon like J.P. Lockhart-Mummery: "At the present day scientific knowledge is taking the place of the old guesswork method of breeding. It is known that the life-forms themselves can be altered permanently by X-rays, and by chemical action." And he argues in a way that is reminiscent of some Nazi scientists in the 30's: "Negative eugenics, while useful in getting rid of obviously undesirable types, even if fully enforced, cannot improve the race. It only slows up the deterioration."¹ A different attitude to the methods of the laboratory and the stud-farm appears in Palmer's The Hesperides, which incidentally also appeared in the same year, in 1936. "--- men were bred with as much attention and care as is given upon earth to flowers and horses."² Aldous Huxley, in Brave New World, gives the most satisfactory solution of all: controlled breeding is no/

1. J.P. Lockhart-Mummery, After Us, p. 52.

2. J. Palmer, The Hesperides, p. 70.

no longer carried out in the crude form of state-marriages and the like but in the far more scientifically acceptable way of "bottled babies" with an approved heredity. The old homunculus story come back in a modern version!

One of the features that constitute an anti-utopia is the attitude towards a collective mass society, which is regarded as a threat to man's right to be an individual, in extreme cases as brutally stamping out every attempt at individuality. This aspect did not appear in the earlier utopias, for in them it was assumed that community life would be acceptable to all. Those who did not conform were regarded as throw-backs to the bad old times and punished. Wells, for instance, discusses what will have to be done in *A Modern Utopia* about criminals and other sub-standard people. Deportation is his solution.¹ Milder forms of anti-social behaviour are represented by the stupid criticisms from within that Wells and Morris use as a kind of oblique praise of the new system. For Ellen's grandfather in *News from Nowhere* is just a soured old man longing for the good old days without realising what they were really like,² and the talkative man Wells introduces in the Chapter of *A Modern Utopia* called *The Voice of Nature*, is/

1. See H.G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia*, pp. 94-102.

2. See W. Morris, *News from Nowhere*, p. 205.

is clearly meant to be a crank.

If it is tacitly assumed in the older utopias that all the best people conform, and that only criminals and cranks cannot co-operate for the common good, the situation is quite different in the new anti-utopias. Here we find the masses who submit opposed to the individual who stands up against standardization. The rebel has become a hero; his refusal to melt into the anonymous masses is more than an act of defiance, it has become the only hope if humanity is to remain human. From Kendal to Orwell they all stress this particular point: the individual must fight against mass-culture, standardisation and dehumanization. In order to convey to the reader that the non-conformist is really superior, rather more care has to be given to the way he is presented. Instead of the usually rather dull people that one finds in the early utopias, in which they are only used as puppets, the hero in the anti-utopias is generally well drawn and psychologically as convincing as the author can possibly make him. On the other hand, the masses are represented as more or less sub-human. This view is particularly stressed in O'Neill's Land Under England. In his subterranean "utopia", the minds of the masses are empty. They have become "absorbed". The man from above is trying to communicate with one of the teachers:/

teachers: "She was telling me why she would not speak to me. She was communicating with me, but handing me the answer as if it had been made up in a packet for her and she was merely the machine that ran it off."¹ Another way of getting standardization is Huxley's Bokanovsky's Process in Brave New World: " 'Ninety-six identical twins working ninety-six identical machines! --- If we could bokanovskify indefinitely the whole problem would be solved.' Solved by standard Gammas, unvarying Deltas, uniform Epsilons. Millions of identical twins. The principle of mass production at last applied to biology. 'But, alas," the Director shook his head, 'we can't bokanovskify indefinitely.' "²

The points summarized in this chapter all throw light on the important changes which took place in the conception of utopias during the last hundred years and which, temporarily at least, resulted in the disappearance of the classical utopia and the growth of the anti-utopia. For, as this survey shows, the attention which was formerly attracted by optimistic forecasts like the majority of the nineteenth century utopias and those of H.G. Wells is now given to the new form; a development which must be seen against the political, social and economic changes in society/

1. J. O'Neill, Land Under England, p. 155.
2. A. Huxley, Brave New World, pp. 4-5.

society. Evidently the type of utopia which was in key with mid-Victorian England is no longer satisfactory to the post-war world, nor can we know if there will ever be a revival of the classical utopia.

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