The
Victorian Studies Association
Newsletter

Ontario, Canada.

THE VICTORIAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Number 17, March 1976 Ontario, Canada

Edited for the Victorian Studies Association of Ontario

Editor: W.J. Keith, University College (English Section)
University of Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1A1

CONTENTS PAGE

Forthcoming Conference 2

Reports of Meetings, Conferences 2

News of Members 4

Journals, Books 4

Library Notes 4

Book Review 6

Victorian Notes 7

EDITORIAL

Beginning with this issue, the Newsletter appears in larger format. We must apologise to those members whose principles of continuing symmetry are offended by this change, but we believe that we have good reasons for our action. It was decided to take this step because our old format involved cutting down from the standard page-size, and this was awkward, time-consuming, and wasteful of paper. The new format will be more economical and easier to produce, and in the present state of inflation and cutbacks, this seemed a timely and wise move. It involves no change in the general layout or contents of the Newsletter.

This issue is also the last that will be appearing under my editorship. The assumption of other responsibilities necessitates my resignation from this post at the end of the present academic year. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking all those who have enabled me to produce what I hope and believe to be some interesting and worthwhile issues over the past two years. Special thanks are due to Professor Hugh MacCallum and his staff at the Graduate section of the Department of English of the University of Toronto for generous secretarial assistance. It is hoped that the name of my successor will be announced at the annual Conference in April. Needless to say, any contributions intended for the next Newsletter can be sent to me at the address given above; they will be forwarded promptly to the new editor.

(W.J.K.)

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCE

Victorian Studies Association of Ontario

The Victorian Studies Association of Ontario will hold its annual conference for 1976 on Saturday, April 10, at the Glendon College campus of York University. We plan to repeat our traditional pattern for the annual conference which has proved successful in the past. Papers will be given by Paul Walton (Fine Art, MacMaster) on "'The Casual Ward' by Luke Fildes" and Juliet McMaster (English, Alberta) on "Allegory and Imagery in The Eustace Diamonds." Discussion will take place after each of the papers and during coffee, sherry, lunch, business meeting and cocktails. The exhibition, a customary feature, will this year be devised by Dr. Sara Keith and will display a collection of dolls dressed in accurately-researched Victorian costume.

The registration fee is $5.00 for members and should be sent before March 31 to Ann Robson, Department of History, Sidney Smith Hall, University of Toronto, M5S 1A1. Members are urged to inform us in advance of their intention to attend, but fees from the disorganized will be accepted in the Senior Common Room of Glendon College during registration at 9.30 a.m. on the morning of April 10.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS, CONFERENCES

Toronto Group

At its first meeting this season, William Coles (English, Michigan; currently Visiting Professor at University College, Toronto) gave a lecture on Alfred Stevens, not the English preRaphaelite but the continental painter popular in Paris in the last half of the nineteenth century. Professor Cole's talk, illustrated with slides, admirably recreated the atmosphere of the salon-painting of the period.

At its second meeting Arthur Haberman (History, York) in a stimulating and most informative paper introduced a discussion "On Buckle and the Nature of Historical Inquiry." The debate over determinism and free will stirred by the

historian's attempt to find the laws governing man's progress raged as fiercely after the paper as it had in Buckle's own time.

Research Society for Victorian Periodicals

[Hans de Groot (English, Toronto) has contributed the following report.]

The seventh annual conference of the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals was held at the University of Toronto on October 17-18, 1975. At the first of its three sessions, one which had the catch-all title "The Intellectual Debate and the Criticism of Literature", J.M. Robson (Toronto) suggested how important it is, in assessing a periodical article by John Stuart Mill, to take into account the journal for which it was written and the audience at which it was directed. Isobel Armstrong (Leicester) discussed some areas of Victorian criticism of poetry, particularly the role of emotion and the absence of any developed symbolist aesthetic, while Maurianne Adams (Massachusetts) spoke on what she saw as a minority tradition in Victorian discussions of poetry--discussions which often centred on the work of Coleridge and which emphasized dream, incantation, magic.

In the second session, on the working-class and radical press, Joel H. Wiener (CUNY) discussed the journalism of Richard Carlile, in turns anti-Christian and Christian milleniarist, advocate of birth control and legalized divorce on the one hand and the death penalty for homosexuals on the other, a writer whose career began in the age of Cobbett and who ended as a hackwriter for various provincial papers, left behind by newer movements such as Chartism and Owenism. Michael Wolff (Massachusetts) then gave a survey of the debates on a variety of topics which took place in The British Controversialist, debates which were sometimes put to a vote of which the outcome is recorded in the journal. He was followed by Trevor Lloyd (Toronto), who gave a detailed account of the fortunes of the periodicals Commonweal (William Morris' journal and the organ of the Socialist League) and Justice (run by Hyndman and the organ of the Democratic Federation). The session concluded with a paper relating to Victorian Canada, a slide lecture by Ramsay Cook (York) on J.W. Bengough and his political cartoons in The Grip.

In the third session, on the illustrated press, the first two papers were related: Ann Hofstra (American Historical Review) discussed with the aid of slides the response of the Illustrated London News to the violence of the 1840s, in particular to the Chartist threat, and T.M. Kemnitz (New Hampshire) did the same for the illustrated weeklies, particularly the Puppet Show. The final two papers, both illustrated with slides, were on the relationship between text and illustrations: Sybille Pantazzi (Art Gallery of Ontario) discussed the relationship between novelist and illustrator, ranging widely from Dickens and Seymour to George Eliot and Frederic Leighton. Allan Life (North Carolina), on the other hand, concentrated on a relatively small number of magazine illustrations by J.E. Millais, which he analyzed in great detail.

The Conference ended with a banquet and entertainment. The banquet was highlighted by F.E.L. Priestley's speech, printed in this issue, a nostalgic evocation of an almost Victorian boyhood, which reminded one listener of G.M. Young and Dylan Thomas in turns. The entertainment consisted of a production by Michael Sidnell of W.S. Gilbert's burlesque, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, originally written for Fun and antedating Tom Stoppard's famous inversion by almost a century--both preceded and followed by a selection of Victorian songs such as "Come into the Garden, Maud" and "The Last Chord". The entertainment ended, as all entertainments--and indeed all conferences--should, with that rousing song "Excelsior!"

(HdG)

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Peter Allen (English, Toronto) is spending a year's leave completing a study of the Cambridge Apostles of the 1820's and 1830's. He would like to hear from anyone else investigating the "intellectual aristocracy," as Annan calls it, the segment of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia to which the Apostles belonged.

George H. Ford (English, Rochester) has been elected the first American president of the Dickens Fellowship, London. He is also scheduled to speak at a Dickens conference in Philadelphia in June.

Norman H. Mackenzie (English, Queen's) read a paper on "The First Readers and Editors of the 'Wreck of the Deutschland'" at the MLA Conference in San Francisco in December. He has also published "The Making of a Hopkins Sonnet: 'Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves'" in the Festschrift in Honour of Edgar Ronald Seary, ed. A.A. MacDonald, recently published by Memorial University Press.

JOURNALS AND BOOKS

Four Decades

The first issue of Four Decades, a journal devoted to poetry in English between 1890 and 1930, has just appeared. Victorian contributions include an article on Hardy's poetry and an account of the founding of the Housman Society. The magazine will appear quarterly, and articles and bibliographies are welcomed. The North American editor is Esther Fisher (231 Lonsmount Drive, Toronto M5P 2Y9) to whom contributions and subscriptions (US$5.50, Can. $5.00) should be addressed. Mrs. Fisher is a member of the Victorian Studies Association, and contributes an essay on "The Pound/Abercrombie Feud" to the first issue.

Budmouth Essays on Thomas Hardy

The Thomas Hardy Society will be publishing this spring the lectures given at the 1975 Summer School at Weymouth. The editor is F.B. Pinion. Inquiries can be directed to the Thomas Hardy Society, 22 High East Street, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1HA, England.

LIBRARY NOTES

A Yellow-Back Collection

[The following account has been written for the Newsletter by Miss Elizabeth Hulse of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto]

In May of last year the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto, acquired a collection of about four hundred "yellow-backs." The yellow-back was a phenomenon of Victorian publishing which first developed in the late 1840's and continued almost until the first World War. By about 1855 it had achieved its characteristic appearance, glazed coloured paper (usually, but not always yellow) over boards, printed with an eye-catching illustration on the front cover, a decorative design on the spine, and advertisements either for other books or for such products as Pears' soap or Fry's cocoa on the back cover. The endpapers also frequently

contained advertisements. The particular appeal of the yellow-back was its cheapness; the usual price was sixpence, occasionally it was as high as a shilling. Its development was a reflection of the wider reading public which resulted from the spread of education in the nineteenth century, as well as the new outlet for bookselling which the railway stalls provided.

The earliest examples of yellow-backs (in fact, in green covers) were volumes in the series The Parlour Library issued by the Belfast firm of Simms & M'Intyre beginning in 1847, approximately a year before W.H. Smith opened their first railway stall at Euston Station. This series was soon followed by Routledge's Railway Library, and many others. Routledge remained a major publisher of yellow-backs throughout the rest of the century. Other important firms were Ward Lock, Chatto & Windus, Frederick Warne, and Smith Elder. The covers were printed from wood blocks in a limited number of colours, usually red, blue and black. Their designers included such well-known illustrators as "Phiz," Birket Foster, and John Leech. Many of them were printed by Edmund Evans, famous for his colour printing of children's books illustrated by Kate Greenaway and Walter Crane. Crane, in fact, began his career with Evans designing "mustard plasters" or yellow-backs. In the period between 1855 and 1865 it is estimated that Evans printed covers for as many as eighty per cent of the yellow-backs being published. In his Reminiscences (published in 1967) he recalls that he sometimes had orders for editions of the same work from two or three rival publishers at the same time. Printings were large, usually at least 5,000, sometimes as high as 10,000 copies, and titles were kept in print for long periods of time making it difficult to date individual issues.

Yellow-backs were almost exclusively fiction. Smollett, Fielding, Scott, Thackeray, and Dickens were published in yellow-back editions, but the bulk of yellow-back publishing consisted of the popular novelists of the day, now largely forgotten. Historical novels in the tradition of Scott by such writers as James Grant and G.P.R. James were common. There were novels of high society and of life in the wilds of Australia and the American West. When detective fiction developed in the 1850's, it quickly became an important part of yellow-back publishing. Foreign literature in translation, particularly from the French and Russian, was popular. Occasionally non-fiction, such as natural history and other hobbies and recreations, appeared in this format.

The collection in the University of Toronto Library was originally the property of a Rev. Walter Scott of Stirling, who recorded in many of the volumes when and where he purchased them. They belong largely to the 1880's and 1890's. Michael Sadleir in his essay "Yellow-Backs" in John Carter's New Paths in Book-Collecting (London, 1934) considers this the age of decadence. Cover design and illustration had become coarsened, and the text was frequently printed from worn type used for the earlier cloth bound edition. A large number of the books in the collection have paper covers, rather than paper over boards, though retaining the characteristic colour and appearance of the yellow-back. They are all in unusually fine condition for such a perishable form of book production. For the modern reader they provide an immediate and vivid contact with Victorian tastes and reading habits.

[E.H.]

BOOK REVIEW

[The following review has been written for the Newsletter by Professor Robert H. Tener, Department of English, University of Calgary, a member of the Victorian Studies Association of Western Canada.]

F.E.L. Priestley. Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry. (The Language Library, ed. Eric Partridge and Simeon Potter) London: Andre Deutsch, 1973. £2.75.

In this most welcome study Professor Priestley pursues the theme of "experiment and exploration in Tennyson's verbal art" through the main phases of the poet's development, though not in any narrow chronological fashion; hence "Enoch Arden" is analyzed before The Princess, and Maud before In Memoriam. He discerns three main phases: youthful intoxication with the resources of language; a more mature concern with the shape of each poem; and the ripened poet's exploration of genre. He provides detailed analysis of selected poems, for the most part the earlier, shorter ones, giving the longer, later poems a more general treatment, often focusing here on structure and on "what the poet is actually doing" in order to "correct what seems to be common critical misapprehensions." Even the last two chapters are "illustrative and suggestive rather than exhaustive." In them Professor Priestley outlines Tennyson's mature response to the problem which particularly concerns the experienced Romantic poet: how to deal with the limitations of language, how to express the inexpressible.

There are so many good things in this book that the reviewer scarcely knows what to single out for praise. Perhaps most welcome is Professor Priestley's willingness to elucidate Tennyson's technique in stanza pattern, syntax, tone, tempo, and prosody, features which are often admired but seldom analyzed. Thus he shows how Tennyson achieved larger structures and movement in spite of the static stanza of "The Palace of Art"; how tone and style are varied but controlled in "Oenone" and The Princess; how youthful exuberance weakens the fourth section of "The Vision of Sin"; and how all these features when thoroughly mastered in 1842 conspired to produce those marvellous creations, "The Lotos-Eaters" and "The Lady of Shalott." But there is no neglect of other aspects of Tennyson's art. He identifies the theme common to "The Palace of Art," "The Lotos-Easter," "Oenone," and "Tithonus." He demonstrates that the variety of styles in The Princess is crucial to the "strange diagonal" of its structure. He writes of "Aylmer's Field" that much of it "suggests a musical composition, . . . building up a kind of tone-poem with accompanying symbolic suggestion." Nor does he neglect poems which are often overlooked, commenting at length on "Mariana in the South," "Enoch Arden," "Aylmer's Field," "De Profundis," and "The Ancient Sage," as well as on The Princess and Maud. Then, too, Professor Priestley shrewdly analyzes received critical views, carefully qualifying the notion that in "The Palace of Art" and"The Lotos-Eaters" Tennyson wished to be aloof from mankind, and neatly demolishing Bagehot's attack on the ornateness of "Enoch Arden." In short, on every page of this book there is something to praise.

One comment and one question, however. In view of this judgment in the present study--"No poet has a better ear for the nuance and suggestions of style than Tennyson"--it is unfortunate that Christopher Ricks' book in the Masters of World Literature series appeared too late for Professor Priestley to answer in detail its disturbing attack on the style of what is called here "Tennyson's most ambitious, and perhaps greatest, work," the Idylls of the King.

Professor Priestley sees Tennyson's experimentation leading to the creation of new genres in that poem, and in In Memoriam and Maud. A few years ago, in his lectures on the burden of the past, Walter Jackson Bate reminded his Toronto audience that after the breakdown of the traditional genres of epic and poetic drama numerous attempts were made in the nineteenth century to produce long poems--The Prelude, Childe Harold, Prometheus Unbound, In Memoriam, Modern Love--but that all these poems were unrepeated ad hoc experiments, for no new genres really established themselves. Persuasive as he is, then, in distinguishing between the traditional conventions which Tennyson employs in these poems and the fresh creations which he develops, Professor Priestley seems to skirt the question: Is it meaningful to speak of a poem as constituting a new genre if that poem had no offspring and began no new tradition? Can a genre have only one example of itself?

But to sum up. In this volume Professor Priestley has achieved a triumph. Lucid in thought and lucid in exposition, this study will speak with equal authority and grace to the academic reader and the non-academic alike. There is no better book on Tennyson's poetic art.

[R.H.T.]

VICTORIAN NOTES

Speech by F.E.L. Priestley

[As noted above, the banquet at the RSVP meeting in Toronto in October was graced by a speech by F.E.L. Priestley, and we are proud to be able to reproduce his speech here, with FELP's permission.]

I imagine I was asked to speak to you after dinner tonight because I come closer than any of you to being a Victorian. I came very close to it. I was born in the year which Einstein published his first paper on relativity. If the soul which left its starry home to animate my infant body had started his journey four years earlier, or if he had come from a star four light-years closer, or if Einstein had not forbidden him to travel faster than the speed of light, I could have been a genuine Victorian, instead of that rather less impressive thing, an early Edwardian.

It has been some comfort to me that the world in which I was young, if it no longer basked in the light of the great Queen, still revealed an afterglow, and the vast majority of the people among whom I grew through childhood were entirely Victorian by birthright. Contemporaries of my grandparents could remember the Crimean War, and indeed I could see Chelsea Pensioners wearing Crimean ribbons. The Boer War, of course, was very recent, and I can still never hear Rule Britannia played without hearing the words children on the street still sang to it:

> Rule Britannia, two tanners make a bob,
> Kruger never never never shaved his nob.

Lord Roberts, "Bobs", was still the great national hero. I was not, to be sure, aware of public issues during my early years: I used to wonder about the message painted high on the walls of several houses in fading black letters, "Vote Tariff Reform", not knowing what a tariff was, nor why it needed reforming, or who painted the slogans. It was the concrete experience of daily life that touched me then, not the abstractions of politics. Every Sunday the home battalion of the county regiment marched back from church parade to their barracks directly across the road, in full dress, led by the colours and the band, marching with the precision of the old regular army, and I was always at

the drawing-room window upstairs to watch them, with a particularly appreciative eye on the bass drummer, with his full-sized bass drum, decorated with the regimental insignia, firmly balanced on the huge leopard-skin stretched over his massive chest.

At the more ordinary daily and less exciting level, life was very much as it had been in the days of the Queen. Apart from the new open-topped electric trams, transport was by horses: Shires of a bulk and strength almost elephantine would pull the brewery drays loaded with a mountainous pile of barrels, digging their toes delicately into the road-way, leaning gently forward to get tension on the thick traces, and then, with great muscles standing out on their massive shoulders, buttocks, and thighs, smoothly draw the whole load into motion. If we took a cab to the station, it was a horse-drawn growler. If we went for a picnic in the country, it was in an open trap driven usually by one of the young uncles. Everywhere the dominant sounds were theclop-clop of hooves, the hoarse but melodious cries of various street-vendors, and the songs of birds. Sparrows, I need hardly point out, feasted all day long on the roads.

Industry, too, was still Victorian. On a summer day, as one walked or trotted by trap through the villages, one still saw at the doors of cottages makers of pillow-lace deftly flipping their tiny bright bone bobbins over the coloured pins stuck in the parchment pattern on the pillow on their laps. In the towns, the main industry was shoe-making, which was partly carried on in relatively small factories, all by then using machines driven by electric motors, but still partly also a home industry, paid by piece-work. The hand-punching of decorative holes on the vamps, for example--most elaborate in brogues--was still done away from the factory, even for the large manufacturers. The factory supplied the cut-out vamps, a punched-out pattern of cartridge-paper, a bag of French chalk to mark the pattern with, and a rotary punch with the various sizes necessary for the holes.

Thanks to a very intelligent young aunt whom I visited when I was four or five, I was taken to see a great steel works at Dudley in Worcestershire, and the famous glass works at Stourbridge, and I remember in vivid detail the processes and technology in each factory. The glass factory was of special interest, since the workers stopped to give us,--my aunt, my brother, and me--demonstrations of all the techniques they used, and to make us a series of glass toys. The techniques of glass-blowing they used were, of course, not Victorian, but centuries old, the only 'modern' element being the gas-fired furnaces for melting the pot of glass. Each of these factories, by the time I had grown up, had of course changed radically in production methods and techniques, and it was a valuable historical experience to see them in 1909.

My early entertainment was decidedly Victorian. The motion picture didn't arrive until just before the War, and even then was of only slight interest as a novelty, not as an entertainment to draw one from live theatre or variety. I began my own theatrical career at the age of four, appearing at the Town Hall in a pantomime, "Dick Whittington', and singing a solo with a sound moral message about robins--the song is still firmly fixed in my memory. The next year I was a little devil in another pantomime, which must have impressed me less deeply, since all I remember is my costume. I was taken very early to Shakespeare's plays, and recall seeing Forbes Robertson, but my chief delight was in the variety shows, and particularly a famous magician, named Maskelyne, who performed some wonders that still baffle me.

I began my research into Victorian periodicals quite early. I was an avid reader from the age of four, and when I had exhausted the domestic library--I remember how I enjoyed Addison's papers on the Mohocks--I used to

go on rainy holiday Saturdays to the public library, where the librarian soon got me interested in the bound volumes of the Strand and other magazines--which is how I met Sherlock Holmes and other old friends.

Christmas was of course the most Victorian part of my childhood. On second thoughts, this is perhaps not so--my Christmasses were in some ways pre-Victorian. Our family eschewed the Teutonic innovations of Christmas trees and Christmas cards. Nor did we make much of Father Christmas. One woke early on Christmas morning to find hung on the bottom of the bed a huge turkey-bag (turkeys came then in beautiful bags woven of straw) filled with toys, which were to be gloated over and played with quietly until a respectable hour for grown-ups to get up. After the glories to eye and ear of Christmas morning service at church, the eating began.

I once pointed out to a Canadian editor that nothing had so powerfully impressed on me the poverty of the Cratchits as their joy over a Christmas dinner made up merely of a turkey and a plum pudding. Our dinner always included a roast of beef, a leg of pork, and a ham, after soup and a few appetizers, with about five vegetables, then the pudding was accompanied or followed by three sorts of blancmange, several sorts of jelly and custard, mince pies and other pastries. Then one moved on to nuts, raisins, and chocolates. Just before going to bed came supper, which offered the same variety cold.--I forgot the trifle. These meals were not only a rich delight but a joyous challenge, which I was pleased to accept, being as a little boy one of those slight and slender ones with a voracious appetite--so much so that my readiness to dispose of left-overs had earned me the family title of Ashbox.

Needless to say, it would kill me, and perhaps most people living today, to try to do justice to meals like that. Urban life and the motor-car have stunted those Gargantuan powers of gorging, and even the English Christmas dinner has shrunk to more human levels. But as in the case of the factories, it was a valuable historical experience to have lived through them, and my memory tells me that as a young Victorian I even enjoyed them.

My memory is indeed packed with far too much to inflict on you, with walks on a hot, dusty road with no cars, no tractors in the fields, no aircraft overhead, no sounds but the sounds of nature or the simple sounds of human activity, of a hammer on metal, of an axe chunking into wood, of a voice called to cattle in the distance, of long moments in which one could hear the birds, the grasshoppers, the wind stirring the leaves and the grass. This is what it was to be a Victorian or a near-Victorian.

(FELP)

The Play's the Thing: "Mary Barton" and "The Long Strike" by Edgar Wright (English, Laurentian)

Even Mrs. Gaskell might have been angry, or at least annoyed, as far as her tolerance and sense of humour allowed, if death had not saved her the embarrassment of seeing Mary Barton 'adapted' for the stage. The ravishment of art by the hack adapter with little taste and a vulturine eye for profit must be seen as an occupational hazard suffered, not always in silence, by novelists in pre-copyright days. Dickens, by the nature of his work as well as his popularity was a major target, sometimes co-operating but often enough the frustrated onlooker. The desecration of Oliver Twist, for example, so overcame him that "in the middle of the first scene he laid himself down upon the floor in a corner of the box and never rose from it until the drop-scene

fell."[1]

But some reputable names also got into the act of adaptation. Drama was booming. Mary Barton fell victim in 1866, when it was produced on September 15 at the Lyceum, in a guise as altered from its original as was Esther's after her fall. (Esther herself was altogether too disreputable a character and had been eliminated from the plot.) There was no hint however that the drama was an adaptation. It appeared as The Long Strike by Dion Boucicault and seems to have been listed solely under his name since then.[2] As all that remains of the novel is the central plot and selected incidents used to create it, this is perhaps as well. The date is significant, a year after Mrs. Gaskell's death. Since there is no reference in Mrs. Gaskell's correspondence to any dramatisation, or to Boucicault, one may assume that Boucicault saw a useful opportunity and took it in the manner of the time. Nevertheless the parentage was hinted at by some reviewers; nor would Boucicault have expected the source to remain unrecognized. But before making a few comments about such matters, and about the nature of the adaptation, we can see what the audience saw.

> Be it ours to note "the manners living as they rise," even of the stage, which are in some sense also those of the age. One is, or should be, the mirror of the other. Our week's record will, we think, prove to some extent that the modern stage seeks especially to reflect the present time.
>
> The performance now taking place at the Lyceum is of itself a strong example in corroboration of our remarks. It endeavours, after the example of the late Mrs. Gaskell in her novels, to place before the audience the actual life of the world--a narrow world, too--the world of Manchester, with its discontented workmen and its manufacturing despots. The piece is entitled "The Long Strike," and relates to a period of unprecedented duration, when the workmen had, notwithstanding the keenest sufferings, refused to return to their labour. The masters assembled in session, consider the fact as a case of sheer rebellion, and, under the influence of Mr. Radley (Mr. J.H. Fitzpatrick) resolve to drive the poor people to desperation. Noah Learoyd (Mr. S. Emery), a Chartist, is the work-people's delegate, and boils over with indignation at the master's conduct. When, too, he finds that Mr. Radley has attempted to seduce his (Noah's) daughter Jane, (Mrs. Boucicault), and that she has saved him from the vengeance of the people by giving him a shelter in her own bed-chamber, and that when there he had overheard the terms of their conspiracy and been thus enabled to denounce his friends and procure their imprisonment, his thirsting for vengeance becomes too strong, so that he waylays and shoots the tyrant and tempter. The effort costs him his reason, and Noah remains a maniac to the end of the play. In committing the crime Noah had used the pistol of Jem Starkie (Mr. J.C. Cowper), and used for wadding a note written by his daughter to Jem. Both are found by the police, and suspicion accordingly falls on Starkie, who is tried on the charge. An alibi could, indeed, be proved by his friend Johnny Reilly, an Irish sailor, but he had set sail from Liverpool; nevertheless, a humorous, crabbed, but good-hearted lawyer, Moneypenny (Mr. H. Widdicomb) conceives the idea of sending to him by electric telegraph. Accordingly he accompanies poor Jane to the office; but, as they are behind time, there seems no chance of doing so. Fortunately, however, the machine

> gives sign of somebody being at the other end, and the humane clerk goes out of his way to transmit the message. This scene is not only novel but highly exciting, and the run of the play probably depends on the singular effect. Reilly obeys the summons, and at the last moment arrives just in time to give his evidence. The play is closely written, with remarkable elegance and with the utmost possible effect. The acting is excellent, in all its parts. The characters that stand out are Mr. Emery's Noah Learoyd, Mr. J.C. Cowper's Jem Starkie, Mr. Widdicomb's Moneypenny, Mr. Boucicault's Johnny Reilly, and Mrs. Boucicault's Jane Learoyd. These were all well acted, and commanded the frequent plaudits of the house.[3]

If we translate from play to novel, Radley (or R'eadley, both are used), is the elder Carson, Learoyd is John Barton, Jane is Mary Barton, Jem Starkie is Jem Wilson, Johnny Reilly is Will Wilson. Other Mary Barton characters who appear are the chairman of the manufacturers and the visiting union leader, for two key scenes are the rejection of the workers' demands and the support from the London union. From there on, however, melodrama gets its way.

Boucicault was a skilled dramatist (his Colleen Bawn, 1860, is his best-remembered play) who set out to give the public what it would like. If it would like someone else's work suitably rehashed, this would solve the problem of creating plots and episodes. Nevertheless his adaptations, whether of earlier plays or other material, were shrewdly geared to his theatre and its audience. He also calculated the distinction between 'literary' and popular success, as the genesis of The Long Strike shows.

> At a dinner party which took place in 1866, the question was discussed as to the value of the literary merit of a play that had recently been produced. One side maintained that the literary element in a drama was rather an impediment than assistance to popular success.
>
> "Gentlemen," said the host, "Will you permit that this question be settled practically? I propose to write three new pieces; one a society drama, relying mainly on its literary treatment; the second a domestic drama; and the third a sensation drama. The pieces shall be produced at the same time, and I guarantee that the success of each shall be in reverse ratio of its merits."
>
> The proposition was received with roars of laughter. Nevertheless, the three pieces were written. "Hunted Down" was the society drama; "The Long Strike" was the domestic play, and "Flying Scud" the sensation piece. They were produced simultaneously in October, 1866, and the results were precisely what Boucicault had anticipated.[4]

(In fact, Flying Scud ran for 207 performances, the horse easily racing ahead of the union delegate. The horse race, live on stage, may have helped.)

A longer article would allow detailed comparison between play and novel; an analysis of what is omitted and what is changed throws light on the structure of Mary Barton and the balance it achieves between description, social insight and passion, individual behaviour and motivation, personal

belief, and narrative art. The purpose of this note is to indicate briefly what Boucicault did. And what he did is spelled out by Allardyce Nicoll.

> "Mixed forms were what the public desired. In 1868 Dion Boucicault told Mrs. Bancroft that although the audience might pretend it wanted pure comedy, it really sought for other things. 'What they want,' he opined, 'is domestic drama treated with broad comic character.' 'A sentimental, pathetic play, comically rendered,' was their desire." [5]

So -- the drama is heightened (and made economical) by fusing Mr. Carson and his son Harry, the obdurate manufacturer and the would-be seducer, into one character. The London union delegate becomes a comic Cockney contrasted to the seriousness of the situation, while a comic policeman, Crankshaw, is created to act as a plot intermediary. Mary's dash to find Will Wilson is replaced by a 'sensation' scene for the stage, the sentiment of the drama tightened by the creation of a good-hearted, comically crusted old solicitor, Moneypenny, to whom Jane comes for help and who hits on the idea of using the electric telegraph. Those who know Mary Barton will know what is left out. What is left is 'domestic drama' with a 'sensation' ending. What is interesting is that Boucicault saw it in the original; and that the reviewer in the I.L.N. could see the play as an endeavour 'to place before the audience the actual life of the world'. (But with critical caution the reviewer says 'endeavours', not 'succeeds'.) We have to accept that however stagey or melodramatic to modern taste, the dialogue is meant in earnest, that when Noah tells the manufacturers that workingmen "are at home in three places -- the mill, the felon's dock and the grave;" when Jem, seeing Jane and Radley together, says "She never cared for me -- I must not watch them -- she turns back wi' him -- they come -- his eyes on hers, her breath mixin' wi' his'n;" when Jane says to Moneypenny, "Heaven bless you,.sir, for taking a poor girl's troubles to heart'" the note of genuine feeling was heard by the audience. We may also wonder at the near, if erratic, affinity of the Lancashire to the Cockney dialect, and at John's speaking with an Irish accent (only Boucicault himself never lost his brogue.) Such questions lead us back to what Mrs. Gaskell achieved with her dialogue and narrative.

A close comparison would lead into a number of interesting issues relating to the growing interest in a 'realistic' and 'contemporary' content through all the literary modes of the mid-nineteenth century. The Long Strike was successful enough to be revived at the Theatre Royal in November, 1869. Let me leave it with one general comment. The play diminishes the novel to the central seduction and murder plot in a class context; the workman's life is narrowed pretty well to union action and a threat to burn down all the mills (which Radley overhears); the action ends as the jury foreman says "Not guilty." When, in the opening scene, Noah Learoyd is asked to expose the workmen's griefs, he replies, "No one knows but Him above, who looks down on our alleys and lanes. He's keeping a reckonin', amd when you get up there He'll show it up to ye." This is the only time there is any reference to religious belief. And what would Mrs. Gaskell have thought about that?

(E.W.)

NOTES

1. J. Forster: The Life of Charles Dickens. Everyman, Vol. 1, p. 100.

2. See e.g. Allardyce Nicoll, History of the English Drama, Vol. V, and George Rowell, The Victorian Theatre.

3. The Illustrated London News, Vol. 49, Sept. 22, 1866.

4. Quoted by Robert Hogan, Dion Boucicault (Twayne, 1969), p. 70.

5. Op. cit., p. 84.