

A STUDY OF REALISM IN THE HISTORICAL

NOVELS OF MARSHALL HERBERT

A STUDY OF REALISM IN THE HISTORICAL NOVELS OF MAURICE HEWLETT

by

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PREFACE

It is obvious to anyone who knows the field that realism is no new thing in the English novel, though the realism of each period differs from that of others and takes its coloring from the period from which it is written. One has only to recall the realism of Richardson, Fielding, Defoe, and Thackeray to be reminded of the various qualities and types of English realism; but the realism of the late nineteenth century, colored as it was by the methods and materials of the new science, added a new quality not found in the older English realism.

An analysis of the effect of this new influence on one small field of the novel, the historical novel, is the purpose of this study. To make the study more concrete, a contrast is made between the older historical novel of Scott and the historical novel of Maurice Hewlett, in whose work the effect of the modern scientific realism may be unmistakably seen. I have chosen The Talisman and The Abbot by Scott and Richard Yea and Nay and The Queen's Quair by Hewlett for specific study because the similarity of characters and periods portrayed gives a definite basis upon which to make such a study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	iii
Introduction	1
I. Comparative Study of Scott and Hewlett	10
II. Realism in <u>The Queen's Quair</u>	16
III. Realism in <u>Richard Yea and Nay</u>	30
Conclusion	41
Bibliography	42

INTRODUCTION

Probably the greatest single influence which colored the realism of the latter part of the nineteenth, and the first few years of the twentieth, century was science, which was declaring itself the spirit of the age and confidently annexing newer and different fields. Charles Darwin had, in 1859, published his Origin of Species which had made science a part of the conversation of the street, of the sermons from the pulpit, and of many articles appearing in the newspapers and periodicals. Thomas Huxley was delivering lectures to workmen to 'apprise the public of the spread of the scientific thought,' and it seemed inevitable that the scientific influence should be felt in practically every phase of human activity. The Industrial Revolution had gradually been gathering momentum and had at last gained the velocity of a mighty tornado, which was twisting social and economic standards and even shaking governmental pillars from their long acknowledged and accepted positions. Machines were taking the place of laborers, slums were becoming populated with people who had been thrown out of work, old doctrines of religion and education were being replaced with so-called modern beliefs, and the spirit of reform and change was found everywhere. Every thinking person seemed to be endeavoring to find, in all the chaotic contradictions, something within which he could rely upon, and many of them professed to have found the truth.

In this atmosphere of change and scientific research, realistic art revived and was quickened by a sense of truth. Realistic literature was defined by its champions as the basing of art on the

veritable photographic representation of observable facts of the contemporary world. The novel for a time treated usually of one or both of two general subjects: (1) the psychological analysis of the individual, with special reference to his response to his domestic and social environment, and (2) a study of family, class, or social problems. It treated its subject with a wealth of detail, factual and ostensibly precise and 'scientific.' The novelists displayed an appetite for close notation; they probed deeply into their own problem, after the manner of a scientist interested in analyzing biological phenomena; they expressed a zeal to see things, neither better nor worse than they were, but as they were; they sought to convey a strong sense of the actual in experience and within the range of the average life; in fact, they began to attempt to analyze and measure human subject matter after the same method which governed the study of the physical sciences. They strove to be as objective, impersonal, and dispassionate as possible, and, at the same time, portray a picture which was unmistakably real.

The perfection of the scientific method is perhaps found in Flaubert's Madame Bovary, in which men and women are described with photographic exactness. Flaubert took the outlines of his plot from actual happenings in his neighborhood and made careful notes of the events, the emotions, and the characters which he wished to reveal. His story is a powerful study of the steps by which the wife of a doctor descends to sin and finally to suicide. Flaubert displays great truthfulness in depicting the stages of moral declension and wonderful accuracy of detail in the subtle analysis of a passionate heart. He believed that the function of the artist is to:

represent; and in order to accomplish this he should, like the savant, mirror only the facts.¹

By this statement Flaubert reveals that he believed that the novelist should study his plan and gather only those facts which prove themselves significant in portraying the characters and the story; and, with the mind of a scholar, the novelist must make sure that he mirrors facts only. The realist, then, must be accurate. Flaubert believed, as did the other disciples of the new realism, that the artist should be in his work what God is in creation, invisible but all powerful; and that Art should rise above personal affections and susceptibilities. He said once, in a letter to George Sand, that it was

time by pitiless method, to give it the precision of the physical sciences.²

One can see by his statement that Flaubert thought the novelist should not resort to fancy but that his work should be quickened by the sense of scientific truth, substantiated by facts which had been noted by a scholar. He did not believe, however, that the work of the artist should be subservient to mere surface appearances of truth, but that

truth makes itself felt only through the attractiveness of form. . . . It is the end of art to give superior life to that which has it not.³

Although the choice of words and beauty of expression become important, realism lies essentially in the treatment of the actual.

1. Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary, St. Dunstan Society, Akron, Ohio, 1904. Critical introduction by F. Brunetiere. Vol. 1, p. xix.

2. Ibid., introduction, p. xix.

3. Ibid., p. xix.

Flaubert sought with the patient spirit of research for the discovery of a word--writing, as it happened sometimes, only two lines in two days. It was not the best word for which he was searching; it was the only word. To Flaubert it was the thing observed which gave the color to what he wrote, and if truth was his mistress, so also was beauty. He worked for five years, writing, rewriting, polishing Madame Bovary; and all this time he was working after the manner of a scientist, but toward the goal of the artist as well. That is, he was striving for accuracy but with a zeal to add beauty to accuracy. He said of his work:

I seek something better than success, I seek to please myself.⁴

To one who recalls the rapidity with which Scott prepared his novels for publication, this scientific and artistic zeal for perfection becomes significant.

Emile Zola reminds us that he, too, belonged to the period influenced by the method of the scientist. He becomes important in this study because (though more properly called 'a naturalist') he made a definite contribution to the scientific realism with which we are interested. He stated his theory of the novel in no uncertain terms:

We must invent no adventure, but simply note the succession of facts regarding a being or a group of beings; we want no merit but that of accurate observation and sound analysis . . . The whole process must be purely casual and heartless. Imagination has no role except to furnish a priori notation to be changed, controlled, and corrected by later experiences. . . The novelist's highest quality is his sense of reality.⁵ In other words, fancy is identical with scientific hypothesis.

4. Ibid., p. xix.

5. Emile Zola, The Downfall, P. F. Collier & Son, New York, 1902. (Translated from the French, with Critical Introduction by Prof. W. M. Sloane), pp. xix-xxii.

He, too, felt that the novelist should simply note the facts and make no pretense at fancy, for fancy in the novelist is as much a fault or weakness as hypothesis is in the scientist; too often a hypothesis is proved inaccurate and subject to change by later discoveries. Zola's novels are representative of the second type mentioned earlier in this study; that is, he is interested in the social problems of his day. His field was necessarily broad and complex because he sought to write only after observation of the succession of facts concerning the people with whom his study was concerned. To prepare for the writing of his stories of French life, he actually spent some time on the farm, became a laborer in the mines, and sold goods in a department store—collecting material, selecting significant detail, and noting the succession of facts by actual observation. The analysis of one of his novels will tend to illustrate what he accomplished by this method.

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In The Downfall, which is a study of France during the reign of Napoleon III, Zola portrays, with great frankness and emphasis on detail, the court and the country of France, its tinsel and its squalor, its weariness and its disgust. He takes the reader into the heart of Paris during the siege by the Prussians in 1870, where he pictures vividly the misery, hunger, disease, and vice which pervade the place. He leaves no doubt that he had seen what he was describing, but he proves the old adage that a man will find what he is looking for, because he sees only the ugly, the low, and the mean. Zola is typical

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6. The Downfall is used in this study, not because it is the best work of Zola, for he perhaps wrote better novels, but because it is a great work and partakes of the nature of a historical novel, since it depicts an historical event and to our generation furnishes an accurate picture of conditions in France during the Franco-Prussian war.

of the school of French writers who believed that the low life more nearly represents the real.

Charles Reade in England reflects the influence of the scientific method, and the reaction which we have noted in the French writers, when he, too, adopts a method like Zola's in preparing his stories. Before writing the prison scenes in It Is Never Too Late to Mend, he visited assiduously the jails and workhouses, observing and checking reports with his own investigation. Reade is also significant in the study of realism in the historical novel because he produced a very fine example, The Cloister and the Hearth. He believed that the duty of historical fiction was to penetrate, study, and digest the hard facts of chronicles and blue-books and to make dry bones live. He accomplished this ideal in his book, which depicts the manners and customs of the people in Holland, Italy, Germany, and France during the fifteenth century. He spent months gathering facts and compiled his material with great anxiety for truth; he describes the food, drink, dress, and entertainments of the peoples of that far-off time with a zest for life which is characteristic of the new realistic awakening. Reade was intimately associated with Zola, having at one time adapted one of Zola's novels for the stage; but he does not share with Zola the feeling that the low life necessarily is nearer the real. One must remember not only that realism, like any other phase of art will differ in different periods but that it will differ with individuals who are contemporaries. It is this difference which makes realism complex in its nature and which is often overlooked by readers and critics as well. The English people have an innate respect

for decorum, which, perhaps, in a measure, accounts for the lack of frank and licentious language found in Reade's novel; but he definitely shows that he is influenced by the new realistic school which allied itself with the probing spirit which searched for truth, built only on facts, and refused to be taken in by appearances. This influence was of such magnitude it was only natural that it should color every phase of the novel and that the best writers should use it to great advantage. Maurice Hewlett, who was growing up during this period, also proved in the first decade of the twentieth century that the scientific method could be of great advantage in producing fine historical novels.

The year of Stevenson's death (1894) was notable in the development of the historical novel, because that year marks the beginning of a tidal wave of historical stories which showed little influence of the scientific method of realism. Any historical romance became popular, so long as it had a sentimental love story and gave some historical personage a role in the plot. It mattered little if the historical foundation betrayed ignorance or if the style was crude. In the United States, an excellent example of this type is When Knighthood Was in Flower, (1898) by Charles Major, which, though it is painfully lacking in distinction, sold over five-hundred thousand copies. Winston Churchill began his career during this period in the early years of the twentieth century and turned to the historical novel. The Crossing and The Crisis are well-known examples of his work, the first of which has the early westward movement as the background for a love story, the latter of which has the Civil War period used in the same way. Paul

Leicester Ford, although a realist by instinct and training, wrote a stirring story of the Revolutionary War period, which showed little of the influence of the new realism, but which conquered the public immediately.

Maurice Hewlett, however, using, as we have said, the scientific method, produced two very fine historical novels. His stories smack of Charles Reade's tone, in that they are redolent of the night lamp and study table; but, on the other hand, he analyzes the reactions of his characters and allows them to act from typical human impulses. History interests him chiefly as a means to an end, or as he has said, as furnishing 'short cuts to the human heart.' Whereas many of his contemporaries had only an exciting tale to tell, Hewlett employs careful observation and painstaking accuracy; but, unlike the French who simply wished to note 'the succession of facts,' he searched through the musty letters and documents for some little clue to the character of the individual that had been in their making. He felt, as did Reade, that it was the duty of historical fiction 'to make dead bones live,' or rather as he said, 'to galvanize dead bones and mouldering dust into an anguished quiver of pain and pleasure.' He said that he ranked himself with the historian in the business of tale-telling and considered that his whole affair was to hunt the argument ⁷ dispassionately. Although the tragical story of Queen Mary had been told, not twice but countless times, he believed with Maupassant that

The point is to look at what you want to express long and attentively enough to find out an aspect of it which no one else has seen or written of.⁸

7. Stanley J. Kunitz, Authors of Today and Yesterday, H. W. Wilson Co., New York, 1934. p. 316.

8. Arthur McDowell, Realism, A Study of Art and Thought, E. P. Dutton Co., New York, 1918. p. 103.

In searching out facts for his work, Hewlett looked upon the yellowed pages of letters and the faded writing of musty chronicles until he caught a clue to the heart of the men and women who had had a part in their making; he saw in cracked and time-dimmed portraits some trick of the sidelong-glance, some lure of the curved lips, some coquetry of dress or ornament of which no one else had ever written, and brought to the novel an accurate knowledge and respect for facts which no one of his contemporaries had seemed to possess. He put his material together with the care and conscientiousness of an artist, plus the zeal of the scientist for accuracy. Like Flaubert in Madame Bovary, Hewlett spent years in preparing The Queen's Quair, rewriting the whole story four times before releasing it to the publisher. The result is a historical novel which, to say the least, is different from those of Scott; and though no one would make the claim that Hewlett ranks with Scott as a novelist, the newer realism which he employed did add quality and substance to the historical novel. An analysis of what this method added is the purpose of the following chapters.

CHAPTER I

Although the emphasis of this study is to note, somewhat in detail, the realistic approach of Hewlett and the differences that are therein manifest, when compared to Scott's The Abbot and The Talisman, it must be realized that these writers do possess several qualities in common. Perhaps the differences can be better appreciated if, first, some of the similar characteristics and tendencies are brought into juxtaposition and, at least, partially analyzed.

Hewlett has been called a romanticist because his stories are largely of the stuff that dreams are made of; and Scott, also, is classed among the romantic writers because he, too, delights in the mediæval and picturesque and handled his material with the freedom and breadth of subject matter that is characteristic of romance. From the content and subject matter found in these four novels it is evident that both writers are romanticists, because in both one finds an attitude of mind in which the glamour and wonder of life appeal more strongly than do the more matter-of-fact aspects. The reader is offered an escape from the sordid and ugly circumstances which are sometimes called reality. In Scott's time, the term romanticism seems to have been used to designate the rise and development of the imagination with the authors reaching into the past to find glamorous and exciting adventure. It is from this viewpoint that the aspects of romanticism in the two authors can readily be compared, because they are not romanticists in the sense which Coleridge or Shelley was. They did not seek spiritual freedom, but

represented the elements of human nature which demand freedom of the imagination to awaken the dim dead past to renewed life and energy. The historical setting for both The Abbot and The Queen's Chair is in the sixteenth century when Mary Stuart was vainly endeavoring to gain the right to wear the crown of England. These writers show romantic feeling for the past again when they both chose an even older age for the setting of two other thrilling romances; that is, the period of the crusade of Richard, the Lionhearted, in The Talisman and Richard Yea and Nay.

Both Scott and Hewlett display a vast and intimate knowledge of the period which they portray, a knowledge stored as a result of long study and wide reading. Scott had learned much of the history of his native country from the ballads and folk tales he had heard in childhood; and when hardly more than a boy, he had burrowed among the manuscripts of the Advocate's Library in Edinburgh. He had also read widely of Scottish history and literature. The Talisman reveals that he found his way into the history of other lands as well. Hewlett, too, possessed a scholarly mind. He had pored over dusty manuscripts, diaries, and antiquated letters; he had read widely in formal history and was considered an authority on heraldry and the history of chivalry. Both men, too, were keen students of human nature. Scott had always been fascinated by the heroic adventures of the personages he had met in the pages of history and by the elements of human nature--the personal things which had transformed them into real men and women. These characteristics of the authors themselves enabled them to portray the actions of their characters in the light of universal human reactions.

Scott once wrote in a Dedicatory Epistle to the Reverend Dr. Dryasdust that

the passions are the same in all ranks and conditions, in all ages and countries, and opinions and actions, in consequence must upon the whole be a strong resemblance to each other.

Hewlett expressed the same attitude toward human nature when he said

Arms pass like the fashion of them, today or tomorrow they will be gone; but, man live, their secret springs what they have always been.¹

Hewlett regarded the document, portraits, letters, and ancient monuments which he had examined as valuable tools to aid him in the interpretation of the nature and character of the person in whom he was interested. Both Scott and Hewlett make their men and women speak and act from big, basic emotions which could have been true in any age.

In the years just preceding the production of Scott's novels there had appeared several productions which had shown some interest in using the past as the background for the plot. These so-called Gothic romances, however, had shown no regard for historical accuracy and had merely portrayed contemporary life and manners in a medieval setting. The conventional setting for this type of story was an old castle, among the ruins of which, the reader was introduced to mysterious terrors, murders, and ghostly horrors.² The authors, who made any pretense of depicting a historical personage did so with

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1. Maurice Hewlett, Richard Yea and Nay, Macmillan, New York, 1901, p. 209.
 2. Mrs. Ann Radcliffe's Mysteries of Udolpho and Miss Clara Reeves' Old English Baron are splendid examples of this type of novel.

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little regard for historical truth. It remained for Scott to bring the sense of reality to the historical novel. The analogy is not, perhaps, too far-fetched when we compare this achievement with what Hewlett did for the historical personages which he placed in his stories. He, too, wrote his historical novels, when that sort of production had been lacking in distinction for more than a generation. His predecessors, however, instead of writing fantastic tales filled with grotesque figures, haunted castles, and 'shrieks and shapes and sights unholy,' had clothed their love stories in a historical setting without lending that setting the authenticity which could be relied upon by the historian, and had written stories of everyday life with little glamour or adventure. It remained for Hewlett to lift the historical novel up when it was showing hardly a flicker of life and to breathe into it the breath of vitality and vigor.

Both writers show a genuine admiration for Queen Mary as a woman. This admiration is expressed in their introductions, and both display their intimate acquaintance with her by means of word portraits set into the stories themselves--portraits that bring out the authors' ability, moreover, to perceive and record detail. Let us first view the portrait by Scott:

Who is there that at the very mention of Mary Stuart's name, has not her countenance before him, familiar as that of a mistress of his youth or the favorite daughter of his advanced age? That brow, so truly open and regal--those eye-brows, so regularly graceful--which yet were saved from the charge of insipidity by the beautiful effect of the hazel eyes,

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3. Miss Sophie Lee wrote The Recess (1783-86) in six volumes. Mary, Queen of Scots, is its heroine; but unlike Scott, who carefully adhered more or less to facts when he introduced historical characters, Miss Lee married Mary Stuart to the Earl of Leicester, and introduced two daughters as the fruit of this union.

which overarched, and which seem to utter a thousand histories—the nose with all its Grecian precision of outline, the mouth so well proportioned, so sweetly formed . . . the dimpled chin . . . of which we know not to have existed in any other character moving in this class of life.⁴

Here we find detail of brow, of eyes, nose, neck, and chin put together into a fine portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots, such as every-reader, perhaps, can remember having seen many times. Hewlett, too, portrays the detail and the familiar portrait in these lines:

fine she was all over; shapely, exquisitely cut and modelled: her sweet smooth chin, her amorous lips. . . her sensitive nose; broad high brows; her neck which two hands could hold, her small shoulders and bosom of a child. And then her hands l. . . and her little feet.⁵

One sees the 'stately, swan-like neck;' the other sees the same slender neck 'which two hands could hold.' Both men have given a veritable portrait which one visualizes even though he had never seen a real picture of the woman.

Scott and Hewlett repeatedly paint the beauty and grace of the Queen, the etiquette of the court, the pageantry attending the movements of the rulers, the intrigue of the courtiers; both describe landscape with a vividness which suggests great familiarity and understanding, and each writes as if he expects his work to be accepted as truth. Scott says in his introduction to The Abbot that

the historical references are, as usual, explained in the notes. That which refers to Queen Mary's escape from Lochleven Castle is a more minute account of the adventures than is to be found in the histories of the period.⁶

4. Sir Walter Scott, The Abbot, Aldine Book Publishing Co., Boston, n. d., p. 212.

5. Maurice Hewlett, The Queen's Quair, Macmillan Co., New York, 1904, p. 10.

6. Sir Walter Scott, op. cit., introduction, p. ix.

In his introduction to The Talisman he states that he

had access to all which antiquity believed. . . on the subject of that magnificent warrior (King Richard).⁷

Let us compare Scott's authoritative tone with that of Hewlett who says

No book ever found out the truth. . . Here, then, is a book which has sought nothing else.⁸

One concludes, then, that Hewlett's story is without doubt based on fact. In Richard Yea and Nay Hewlett shows that same regard for accuracy when he says that he "sings of Richard's own thoughts."⁹

One could hardly fathom the thoughts of a man without knowing a great many intimate facts concerning him. These statements made by the authors reveal that they felt that they possessed a knowledge of their subject and did not pretend to write from conjecture nor fancy.

These points of comparison show that Scott and Hewlett had many similar characteristics, but the difference which the scientific method made in the handling of the subject is the basis for the continuation of this study.

7. Sir Walter Scott, The Talisman, Harper & Bros., New York, n.d., p. 14.

8. Maurice Hewlett, The Queen's Quair, prologue, p. 3.

9. Maurice Hewlett, Richard Yea and Nay, pp. 209, 210.

CHAPTER II

A study of The Abbot and The Queen's Quair not only reveals some points of similarity between the elements of realism found in the works of Scott and Hewlett but many differences in the realistic approach of the two authors. In discussing these differences, it is the purpose of this phase of the study to analyze the extent to which the elements of scientific realism influenced Hewlett and to draw some conclusion as to the contribution this sort of realism has made to the historical novel.

Probably the first difference in approach which becomes obvious upon merely a cursory reading of the two works is expressed by the authors themselves. In Scott's introduction to The Abbot he says:

I venture to waken in a work of fiction, the memory of Queen Mary, so interesting by her wit, her beauty, and her misfortunes, and the mystery which still does and probably will always overhang her history.¹

He tells the reader what is interesting about the Queen but makes no statement as to how realistic he intends to make his portrayal of her, and explains at the very first that his story is purely 'a work of fiction,' and that his object is to waken the memory of Mary because she had an interesting life. Hewlett, however, is very definite in his purpose; using the manner of a scientist who feels duty bound to state his problem definitely and accurately, he says that

A book about Queen Mary--if it be honest--has no business to

1. Sir Walter Scott, op. cit., introduction, p. 9.

be a genteel exercise in the romantic: if the truth is to be told, let it be there. . . . No book ever found out the truth, because none ever sought her heart. Here, then, is a book which has sought nothing else, and a song which springs from that only.²

The proposition is stated squarely as to what he has sought to do. We are prepared to learn the truth about Queen Mary, not what other novelists have told about her, because others did not possess the knowledge which Hewlett has been able to acquire. He then explains why he has this added knowledge; that is, that he has learned the workings of her heart and was therefore able to show all "the tragic error, all the pain, known only to her that moved in it."³ Scott does not show any intention of attempting to do all these things; he merely states that she is interesting by her 'wit, her beauty, and her misfortunes.' He mentions these as if the reader is perhaps as aware of them as he, himself, is. Hewlett displays the delight of the scientist who has discovered biological truth by having gone further in his research than any other when he so emphatically says:

No book ever found out the truth, because none ever sought her heart. . . and to know her is to hold the key to that.⁴

We are thus led to infer that he, alone, holds the key.

Although Scott makes no pretense of complete accuracy, he does say:

I naturally paid attention to such principles of composition as I conceived were best suited to the historical novel.⁵

2. Maurice Hewlett, *op. cit.*, prologue, pp. 2,3.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

5. Sir Walter Scott, *op. cit.*, introduction, p. 9.

Let us examine the formula which he then conceived as that best suited to the historical novel. It is somewhat complex, but he has used it effectively in several of his best historical novels. His story is fictitious, his hero imaginary, and the private story is swept along into the stream of large public events where the fate of the adventurer is involved in the lives of great historical person-⁶ages. The formula, which seems to be original with Scott himself, necessitates that the plot be pretty well developed before the historical personage is introduced. This is the case in The Abbot, which does not introduce Queen Mary until the book is half finished. She is already a prisoner in Lochleven Castle when Roland Graeme sees her walking toward him and recognizes by her stately mien and distinguished beauty that she undoubtedly is the Queen. Scott proceeds to paint a marvelous portrait of Mary, but his choice of detail reflects his Tory tendencies and the effect of his early training, in that he chooses the regal qualities which she possesses and always refers to her as the 'Queen.' Throughout the book he bows to her in the homage which he feels is due the sovereign of Scotland and portrays her as such in relation to all the other characters. Her pages, soldiers, waiting maids, even her enemies, respect her as a Queen. Sometimes when he is painting a wonderfully intimate portrait, one feels that he is just ready to let down the bars and reveal her as a woman, but before the picture is finished he adds a phrase or a sentence which reminds us definitely

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6. The hero in The Abbot is Roland Graeme whose private life is linked with that of Catherine Seyton. Roland becomes Queen Mary's page, and Catherine is assigned to be her personal companion. Their private love affair is thus brought into the direct path of a great national and political conflict.

that she is not only a lovely woman but a 'Queen.' The following sentence will illustrate this.

She snatches from her head the curch or cap which had been disordered during her hysterical agony, shook down her thick clustered tresses. . . and drawing her fingers through the labyrinth which they formed, she rose from her chair and stood like the inspired image of a Grecian prophetess, in a mood which partook at once of sorrow and pride--of smiles and tears. . . . and said, "We will strive to present ourselves as becomes a queen."⁷

Even in her hours of sorrow, distress, and imprisonment Mary, herself, does not allow the reader to forget her royalty. The other characters, too, always address her as 'Princess,' 'Sovereign,' or 'Her Majesty,' and we find that at one time when she is almost overcome with emotion and is about to give way to womanly tears, the old abbot, who is very dear to her, admonishes her:

Be a queen, madam, . . .and forget that you are a woman.⁸

Hewlett makes no statement of the principles which he has employed in the writing of his book, except as we infer them from his statement in the prologue, which we have already noted, that he intended to write nothing but the truth concerning Queen Mary. The other characters, too, are real because he says:

Here we have real players in a game tremendously real.⁹

He brings out further that he has no intention of inventing any of the episodes in the plot because there is mystery enough and it becomes

7. Sir Walter Scott, op. cit., p. 216.

8. Ibid., p. 398.

9. Maurice Hewlett, op. cit., prologue, p. 2.

his task to make the mystery clear by looking deeply into the heart of her who had created it. He seems to think that by knowing the causes of the so-called mystery all the unknown factors concerning the life of Mary Stuart can be understood. The reader is prepared to find a story which is different from any other on Queen Mary because Hewlett knows what others have merely guessed at.

Hewlett's formula is not nearly so complex as that of Scott because his scope is so much narrower. His story is concerned with no other heroine except Mary Stuart and with no other characters except those who have contributed to her 'love business.' The plot covers only the six tragic years when the error and pain of Mary's life were most intense. The elements of his formula are of composite nature, smacking at times of the romantic, but for the most part he reflects the influence of the newer scientific realism which had become the method of other novelists mentioned earlier in this study. His formula might be stated very briefly in such manner as: To portray the real story of a real queen, told as it really happened. He, too, paints portraits, as did Scott; but he brings out intimate facts which he has found by careful observation. He allows us to see

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a tall slim girl, petted and peevish

or

Her lower lids were nearly straight, her upper rather heavy: between them they gave her a sleepy appearance, sometimes a sly appearance the light acted upon hers as upon a cat's eyes. ¹¹

10. Maurice Hewlett, op. cit., p. 9.

11. Ibid., p. 9.

He finished the picture by explaining that the cardinal detested
¹²
 her trick of the side-long look.

He treats of Mary, as a woman who had made many errors and had often been familiar and sometimes afraid in the presence of people who were of lower social stature, rather than as a superior individual who was at all times a queen. At one time Mary Livingstone, one of Mary's maids, said to the Queen:

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"I wish you would be more 'Madame' to the Hepburns."

Hewlett tells us another time that

The Earl of Bothwell laughed at everything, and had looked drolly on at her efforts to be a queen, and chosen to do nothing to help or hinder. . . . She never knew herself less a queen or more a girl than when he was before her. Laughed he or frowned, was he eloquent or dumb as a fish, he intimidated her, diminished her, drove her cowering within herself. ¹⁴

This attitude toward royalty can perhaps best be explained by noting the attitude of the period. The great industrial development in England had resulted in the loss of much of the prestige which the landed aristocracy had enjoyed when the ownership of land was the sole source of wealth. The accumulation of fortunes and the political leadership which the middle class was enjoying in Parliament caused a great levelling, and many felt that 'Judy O'Grady and the colonel's lady were sisters under the skin.' Hewlett reflects this attitude throughout his book. He presents Queen Mary as a 'little woman' who giggles with her waiting-maids after they are in bed and whispers to

12. Ibid., p. 9.

13. Ibid., p. 97.

14. Ibid., 92.

them of 'he and him.' He allows the other characters to speak to and of the queen as if she were an equal. She, in turn, teases Mary Livingstone, flirts with the young men, and tells them that she must 'love and be loved.' The removal of the glamour from the sovereign of Scotland adds a tangible reality which is impossible to attain when the reader feels that he must kneel in her presence.

Although Scott is masterful in the use of detail, it is of a different sort from that which Hewlett employs. Hewlett emphasizes not merely detail in scenery or in beautiful description, but the type that is a result of accurate and painstaking observation, carefully recorded. There is scarcely a page of The Queen's Quair which does not contain at least one example of this sort of detail. Let us examine a few.

She smiled away, and drummed on the ledge with her long fingers, looking wistfully down, not choosing to agree. ¹⁵

She looked very tired. . . ¹⁶

. . . picked at a knot with her needle . . . ¹⁷

. . . with the needle's eye to the light and the wool made sharp by her tongue. ¹⁸

She picked her lip with the needle. ¹⁹

Or the characteristic which he gives Mary (the instances are many) of pinching her lip between her thumb and forefinger when she becomes
²⁰
 contemplative; or when he explains that Mary 'looked with the pure

15. Ibid., p. 9.

16. Ibid., p. 165.

17. Ibid., p. 72.

18. Ibid., p. 72.

19. Ibid., p. 74.

20. Ibid., p. 36.

inquiry of a child. ²¹

All of these show that he had gone about his business of gathering facts as a scientist who looks for his proof with a magnifying glass. But who has not a clear mental picture of a woman who has picked at a knot with her needle, or had to wet her thread with her tongue before turning the needle to the light so that she could see to thread it? The other characteristics mentioned bring to memory the pictures we have seen of Queen Mary when she looked very much a child.

There is another type of detail which Hewlett uses with great realistic effect. It has sometimes been classified as 'the familiar touch,' and it does lend not only the tone of careful observation but also a familiar knowledge of the characters. When he records that the cardinal detested 'her trick of the side-long look,' one recalls the eyes in more than one portrait of Queen Mary. When he tells us that Adam Gordon (after Mary had pretended not to see that he was shameful and sullen, and had held out her arms to him and exclaimed, "Oh, Adam, they have hurt you! And you have hurt me!") had

looked at her askance. . . . fired up . . . gulped a sob
. . . and then had jumped forward and cried his heart out
on her bosom. ²²

One recalls the action in many a little boy in one's own acquaintance. Let us examine what the familiar touch has done for the Earl of Bothwell.

The bridge of his nose was broken; few observed it or guessed at the brawl which must have given him it. ²³

21. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Hewlett need not tell us more, for we know what kind of a brawl will give a man a broken nose.

Hewlett's use of color in description seems upon the first reading to be only a part of his style; but as one analyzes with what subtlety and effect he uses it, one is led to conclude that it is another evidence of accurate observation, and the result of conscious effort to make his work more realistic. A contrast of a few of Scott's descriptive adjectives with Hewlett's vivid use of color will tend to illustrate what color has done for Hewlett.

the languor of her looks was so far from impairing her beauty, that it only substituted the frail delicacy of the lovely woman for the majestic grace of the queen. . . . Her hair, . . . escaping from beneath the head-tire . . . fell in long and luxuriant tresses of nature's own curling.²⁴

There is plenty of detail: 'frail delicacy,' 'majestic grace,' 'luxuriant tresses;' in different places there are such descriptive phrases as: 'deep mourning robe,' 'unrivalled charm,' 'a glance which would have melted a heart of stone,' etc. But let us examine Hewlett's description:

. . . chestnut-haired. . . . Her skin . . . seemed transparent, with colour that warmed it from within, faintly, with a glow of fine rose . . . revealed the glimmering hazel of the eyes. . . which sometimes seemed to be yellow. . . her lips. . . bright red where all else was pale as a tinged rose.²⁵

Chestnut, transparent, fine rose, hazel, bright red--common, plain words, but they add vividness and reality to the picture of Mary.

Hardly a character is allowed to enter the pages of The Queen's Quair who is not accurately described as to color of hair, dress, or eyes.

24. Sir Walter Scott, The Abbot, p. 324.

25. Maurice Hewlett, The Queen's Quair, pp. 9, 10.

It is as if he were personally acquainted with them. He gives this tone of personal acquaintance many times by noting the small characteristics of the men and women, as for instance:

The queen shifted, sighed, and played hasty tunes with her fingers on the table: she was never still. . . . Her gown was cut low and square: one could see quite well how short her breath was and how quick. Yet she said nothing. Once she and Lady Argyll exchanged glances; the Mistress of the robes inquired with her eyebrows, the Queen fretfully shook the question away.²⁶

One feels that the author must have been present at the conference to have observed the exchange of glances and the nervous 'playing of hasty tunes' by the Queen. Another instance of intimate personal acquaintance is shown in this description:

The queen sat upon a heap of cushions by the fire, leaning back a little to ease herself. Her chin was in her hand . . . Her condition was not hid, and her face would have told it in any case—pinched, peaked, pettish. Her eyes were like a cat's, shifty and ranging. . . . She glanced up sideways at the girl by the door.²⁷

In Scott's descriptions the reader is never given the intimate observation of the physical condition of the queen as these instances show; but the newer realist delighted to portray details which no one else had recorded.

Hewlett shows not only a zeal for detailed accuracy but for historical authenticity as well. We find him recording incidents with such statements as:

All came out to see her make her entry on the Tuesday.²⁸

26. Ibid., p. 241.

27. Ibid., p. 219.

28. Ibid., p. 40.

or

When, on the 6th of March, the expected stroke fell upon my Lord Chancellor Morton, and he was required to hand over the seals of his high office to the Queen's messengers.²⁹

In relating the events of the days preceding the trial of Bothwell, he says:

Driven to it at last, on the 24th day of the month she wrote to old Lennox that Bothwell should be tried by his peers. . . . The Assize was fixed for the 12th April. On the 7th of that month the Earl of Moray left Scotland He stayed a day at Berwick, and had a long conference with the English Warden, and then took the ship for France.³⁰

As a continuation of the chronicle of those turbulent days he records that

Paris took a letter to Lady Bothwell from Dunbar on the day after the ravishing: he fixes his date from the fact that Sir James Melville happened to tell him that it was his birthday, the 25th of April. . . . This is how Paris learned that the process of divorce was begun. He dates it the 26th-27th of April.³¹

The whole episode is related with this tone of historical accuracy, with a note thrown in a little later of the weather.

There at Borthwick, they stayed through the 8th and 9th of June: close weather, with thunder brewing.³²

These last three references, which are representative of the careful historical accuracy which is manifest throughout the story are taken from one chapter. To this type of reference Hewlett adds the tone of diligent research when he tells the reader of Queen Mary:

I find that she was dressed for the day in a 'stiff white satin gown sewn all over with pearls.'³³

29. *Ibid.*, p. 229.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 444, 445.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 451, 452.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 461.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

Note the quotation marks which give the impression that he has copied, word perfect, from the document in question. Again he says:

Le Secret des Secrets has a note upon this day and the aspect of the crowd which he says was dangerous.³⁴

After quoting verbatim from the record of Des-Essars concerning the queen's relationship with her husband who was ill, Hewlett says:

Here, for the time being I forsake Des-Essars, and that for two reasons: the first, that I have a man to hand who knew more; the second, that what little the Brabanter did know he did not care to tell. A more than common acquaintance with his work assures me that his secret preoccupied him from hereabouts to the end--that Secret des Secrets of his which he thought so important as to have written his book for nothing else but to hold it. . . . We shall come upon it all in good time.³⁵

With references such as the one quoted, one gets the impression that Hewlett possessed a knowledge of the subject gleaned from more than one source. He employs footnotes to inform the reader of explanations, or of a weakness which some quoted record possessed. In places one finds such statements as: 'there is a writer who is mistaken,' or 'here is one who blundered badly,' or 'here is one who lied boldly or with malevolent purpose.'

There are several items of historical interest which Scott, even though he does create an atmosphere of truth, does not record in The Abbot. One, for instance, is that he fails to acquaint the reader with the fact that Mary is with child while she is a prisoner in Lochleven Castle, nor is any reference ever made to the baby. Hewlett, on the other hand, is very careful to record each small item of historical fact.

34. Ibid., p. 42.

35. Ibid., pp. 417-418.

One would gather from reading The Abbot that all of Scotland revered Mary Stuart as a queen and that even her enemies paid her the respect due a sovereign; but Hewlett treats of her relationship with her subjects with the air of an impersonal historian. He describes the ugliness of the remarks made about the queen because she chose to speak French instead of her native tongue, and of the women's gossip about Mary's relations with the Earl of Bothwell; and he employs known historical facts to serve his realistic scenes. History records that Charles Darnay was a victim of that dreaded disease, small-pox. Hewlett takes the reader into the bed-chamber of the king, and we hear him talk and 'babble in the random way of the very sick.' We hear his short breaths, hear him beg his wife for a kiss, and see her dip the tips of her two fingers in a 'cup of water and putting them together, touch the back of his hand with them.' Then when he asks her to kiss his forehead, we see her repeat the touch of two wet fingers on his foul and reddened skin. Then we see the king as he sighs contentment, lies quiet, and after a few minutes drops off into a restless sleep.

Stefan Zweig in his biography of Mary, Queen of Scots, said:

Any one who has read The Abbot in childhood will continue throughout life to regard this historical fiction as more vivid and even more truthful than what is called historical truth, for when a gifted imaginative writer sets to work, the beautiful legend he constructs will often gain the victory over reality.³⁶

But Hewlett did not purport to write a legend. He leaves the reader quite indifferent as to how many other writers before him have handled the same theme: he has made of Queen Mary a tangible reality

36. Stefan Zweig, Mary--Queen of Scotland and the Isles, Viking Press, New York, 1935, p. 244.

--always more woman than queen--desperately dependent upon human sympathy and adulation. He showed that he was able to give his imagination full play without robbing the story of its historical truth and convincing quality, because he tells it with the conscientiousness and exhaustive minuteness of one who knew his subject as the realists know their contemporary men and women. It is notable that Hewlett felt that he had used the same impersonal method as the historian, and in spite of the success of The Queen's Quair, expressed disappointment³⁷ that it was not accepted as history rather than as fiction.

37. Stanley J. Kunitz, op. cit., p. 316.

CHAPTER III

Although a study of The Abbot and The Queen's Quair reveals several points of difference in the realistic approach of Scott as compared with the scientific method employed by Hewlett, a similar study of The Talisman and Richard Yea and Nay will not only support those points already noted but also, by the addition of a few other characteristics which become evident, will give a somewhat more substantial foundation upon which to base one's conclusions concerning the contribution of the new scientific realism in the historical novel.

One finds in Richard Yea and Nay that Hewlett is interested in the heart of the human being who is represented to the world as Richard, Coeur-de-Lion, and that he has employed exhaustive research in attempting to find the secret of the seemingly complex nature of the man. Hewlett states his aim definitely when he says:

I sing less of the arms than the man, less of the panoply of some Christian king offended than the heart of one in its urgent private transports; less treaties than persons, the actors rather than the scene.¹

The reader finds more the chronicle of a great man than of a great king: the qualms he suffered, the vows he made and afterwards broke, the thoughts he had and afterwards was ashamed of, the love of which he was capable but afterwards could not enjoy because of the demands of the world; his subsequent marriage which he never allowed to be a marriage in truth; the untold story of why he was so much Yea and Nay. There-

1. Maurice Hewlett, Richard Yea and Nay, Macmillan, New York, 1901, p. 209.

fore, the plot centers not so much in the historical significance of national interest or of historical personages, as such, as in the private life of the ruler for whom the book is named. The Queen's Quair, or the Queen's book, becomes in this instance The Life and Death of Richard Yea and Nay. Hewlett's aim becomes just as concentrated and compact as that in the former study and he writes the real story of a real king as it really happened; with little or no concern as to what the world has thought or known of him. Hewlett's interest is in the secret struggles of a man whose nature was eternally at war with itself. The author has learned his facts concerning the man by consulting among other documents and antiquated records, the notes left in the diary of a life-long friend of the man whose friendships were few. This friend is Abbot Milo, who was not only friend but confessor and companion of Richard on many a journey. Hewlett explains the weight and bulk of his research in subtle manner when he says,

You shall dip into his (King Richard's) bag for refreshment, but must leave the victualling to me.²

From the opening pages we are led to feel that Hewlett is absolutely sure of his material; even his first sentence begins 'I choose to record. . .'. He evidently knows a great many facts which he will not use and has made a definite choice of those which will serve his purpose here.

Scott, on the other hand, admits that most of the events introduced in his story are fictitious and that

reality, where it exists is only retained in the characters of the piece.³

2. Maurice Hewlett, op. cit., Exordium, p. 4.

3. Sir Walter Scott, Waverley Novels, Vol. xxxvii, The Talisman, Harper & Bros., New York, n. d., introduction, p. 21.

We are, then, in Scott, confronted with a complexity similar to that found in The Abbot: the story is principally fictitious, the hero is imaginary; but there is reality in the characters who make up the piece. The private adventure of Kenneth, however, is connected with Richard I much earlier in the plot than that of Roland Craeme with Queen Mary in The Abbot. The freedom displayed by Scott in composing historical novels is here in evidence in even greater degree, since there is less documentation and far fewer explanatory notes concerning the historical facts in The Talisman than in The Abbot. He does include, however, as an appendix to his introduction a legend concerning King Richard, a part of which he has quoted from James's History of Chivalry.⁴ He also explains that he had no intention of competing with anyone who had visited the East and knew the country, but that he had conceived that Richard, who was

a wild and generous pattern of chivalry, who showed at the same time all the cruel and violence of an Eastern sultan, and Saladin, who displayed the deep policy and prudence of a European sovereign, while each contended which should excel the other in the knightly qualities of bravery and generosity⁵

afforded material possessing peculiar interest. In his explanation he betrays a wide knowledge of the characters whom he has chosen for his work. Furthermore, he informs the reader that he has had access to all which antiquity believed--whether reality or fable--on the subject of that magnificent warrior, Coeur-de-Lion.⁶ Therefore, one should not read The Talisman with no sense of reality, but one is given definitely

4. Ibid., appendix to introduction, pp. 33-30.

5. Ibid., introduction, p. 13.

6. Ibid., p. 14.

to understand that Scott does not feel bound to the accuracy which the scientific method imposed upon later writers.

Hewlett, on the other hand, in Richard Yea and Nay employs the same careful documentation that characterizes The Queen's Quair. He gives credit to those records which he deems are authentic and explains the weakness of others.⁷ He quotes whole passages verbatim from the letters or diaries which he has consulted. He gives the tone of accurate observation by the same devices which he employed in The Queen's Quair: that is, by the choice of small, significant details, a vivid use of color, and the familiar touch. These devices enable Hewlett to make his scenes and characters more real and alive than Scott has made them in The Talisman.

The difference in the method of approach and the attitude of mind of the authors has made a great difference in the treatment of the characters and the epoch which has been chosen for the background of both The Talisman and Richard Yea and Nay. In The Talisman our interest is involved in the intrigue and spectacular display of the court which surrounds the king, even in a land far distant from his home country, and the preserving of the honor and good name of Sir Kenneth. We are agreeably relieved, if not greatly surprised, to find that Kenneth is, in truth, David, Earl of Huntington, Prince Royal of Scotland. Scott portrays the knights as we would like to have them--gallant, brave, and at heart loyal and true. King Richard is regal and fine. We are led to believe that the king is striving to be just, even when cruel and

7. Maurice Hewlett, op. cit., Exordium, pp. 3,4.

seemingly heartless, and that when shown that he is in the wrong, he will alter a royal decree for the sake of honor. His love-life is kept in the background by his activities as a leader and a king. Scott's Toryism is in evidence in this book, as in The Abbot, and the reader is led to feel that no knight could have been capable of the valor and nobility of Sir Kenneth had he not been of royal blood.

In Richard Yea and Nay the reader becomes conscious from the beginning that he is to become acquainted with Richard, not as a count or kind, but as a man. One sees him thus:

a tall young man, high-coloured and calm in face, straight nosed, blue-eyed, spare of flesh, lithe, swift in movement. . . The first flush of him moved your admiration: great height, great colour, red and yellow; his beard which ran jutting to a point and gave the jaw the clubbed look of a big cat's; his shut mouth and cold considering eyes; the eager set of the head.⁸

Here we see the same method which was noted in The Queen's Quair; that is, the portrait is drawn with a vivid use of color and small, significant detail. Hewlett had looked at his subject until he had seen significant characteristics which others had long overlooked or had not been able to see. After we have been introduced to Richard with the portrait, Hewlett notes the two-fold character of the man. Since it is difficult to improve on the original, the exact words of the author are included here.

He was at once bold and sleek, eager and cold as ice. . . . Furtive he was not, yet seeming to crouch for a spring; not savage yet primed for savagery; not cruel, yet quick on the affront, and on the watch for it. He was neither a rogue nor a madman; yet he was cunning as the one and as heedless as the

8. Ibid., p. 15.

other, if that is a possible thing. He was arrogant but a smile veiled the fault. . . . He trusted his own force too much and despised everybody else in the world. Not that he thought them knaves; he was certain they were fools. . . . This, then, was Richard Yea and Nay whom all women loved and few men.⁹

After such a description, one has forgotten (or it has become of little importance) whether Richard be prince or pauper; it is the man in whom we are interested. When somewhat later in the book we read

Whether he was good man or not, a good husband, a good lover or not, he was passionately a father. In every surge and cry of his wild heart he showed this.¹⁰

we are still sympathetic with and interested in the man.

Scott cannot forget that even Richard, whom he characterizes as a wild and generous pattern of chivalry, is after all a sovereign. When he is introduced into The Talisman, Richard is ill from a slow and wasting fever which is peculiar to the Asiatic country. If Scott were inclined to let the reader see only the man, this would give an excellent occasion, because suffering and illness can take away the glamour of royalty. Scott, however, after extolling the soldierly qualities of the man who lies on the couch, takes occasion to remind the reader that he must remember that the patient is

Cœur-de-Lion, suffering under all the furious impatience of a soldier withheld from battle and a sovereign sequestered from authority.¹¹

To introduce Richard into the story Scott uses a portrait as he did with Queen Mary. Here, too, he emphasizes the regal and manly features rather than the familiar, subtle detail which is found in the portrait

9. Ibid., p. 15.

10. Maurice Hewlett, Ibid., p. 265.

11. Sir Walter Scott, op. cit., pp. 92, 93.

presented by Hewlett. The reader of Scott sees the implements which lie on a small table by the bed: the shield, the golden circlet which with the purple velvet and embroidered tiara formed the emblem of England's sovereignty, and the great battle axe which would have wearied the arm of anyone but Coeur-de-Lion. Here, then, is a man ill, wasted, and unshaven, but nevertheless, a great and mighty king.

One sees a great difference in the treatment of the battle scenes. Scott describes the pageantry and show which accompany the conflict between Sir Kenneth and Corrade near the Diamond of the Desert: the embroidered flags; the gilded ornaments; the coverings of the large pavillions, gay with many colors; the decoration on the tops of the pillars and tent poles; the savage welcome of the Arabs; and, when the dust had cleared away, the dramatic approach of King Richard to meet the equally dramatic entry of the Saladin, who, dressed strikingly plain but richly jewelled, comes forth on a milk-white Arabian horse.

12

He dwells on the parade and display of both the rulers; and immediately after the battle, he clears the ugly scene with a short sentence or two, so that the reader is left no longer conscious of the ugliness which might have attended the battle. Not so with Hewlett, who, like the French Zola, sees the ugly reality of the struggles which are a part of the conflict between the Christians and the Turks. The modern realist sees the slinking of men in the darkness, the flies that devour the dead bodies which have been thrown from the city walls into the lagoon and there 'be rotting.' 'The place has a dreadful smell, and a dreadful sound. . . with the humming of the flies and the dull rippling of

12. Ibid., pp. 406-420.

the sharks.* We see the Archduke scratch his beard and then see the swarm of flies which swell and shrill. The horrors and odors and sounds are heaped into a mighty picture. When the men are fighting in a hand-to-hand struggle, let us examine the method Hewlett uses to portray the bloodiness and horror of the conflict:

This was butcher's work, like sawing through live flesh. Too much blood in the business: after a while the haft of the king's axe got rotten with it, and at a certain last blow gave way and bent like a pulpy stock. He helped himself to a beheaded Hareluk's scimitar and did his affair with that.¹³

Here are choppy sentences; plain, common words; but they are combined with a subtlety and effect that present a horrible picture. This passage is characteristic of the manner in which Hewlett allows the reader to see the battles: the gruesome reality of men with their heads cut off, the blood, the smells, the oppressive atmosphere of the crunching of battle axes as they cut through live flesh. One forgets that these combats were staged in the far-off middle ages; they are as real as if they were part of a brawl which happened only yesterday.

Many are the instances which display Hewlett's use of accurate observation and the trick of the familiar touch. To list them profusely would lead to monotony, but a few of them will serve our purpose.

Instead of saying that Richard kissed his wife's hand, Hewlett says,

Richard touched Berengere's hand with the hair on his lip.¹⁴

That he touches her hand merely with the hair on his lip changes the quality of the kiss, and an ordinary observer might not have caught the difference. Let us note the care he manifests in recording every

13. Ibid., p. 324.

14. Ibid., p. 226.

detail of the morning when Jehane is in the city where her lover is being held prisoner. As she goes to the prison early in the morning, Hewlett records

There were few to see her, none to dare her harm. . . . Two eunuchs at a wicked door spat as she passed; she saw the feet of a murdered man sticking out of a drain, the scurry of a little troop of rats. Mostly the dogs of the city had it to themselves. No women were about, but here and there a guarded light betrayed sin still awake, and here and there a bell, calling the faithful to church, sounded a homely note of peace.¹⁵

He sees not only the rats and wicked men, the light creeping from under the drawn shade, but hears the quiet, peaceful sound of the church bell, calling the faithful to worship. The little observation that 'mostly the dogs of the city had it to themselves' adds the familiar touch that brings the morning into the experience of every reader, for who has not been abroad early in the morning when 'mostly the dogs had it to themselves?'

The familiar touch brings out the subtle traits of character, as was pointed out in The Queen's Quair. Notice the weakness betrayed by Berengere when Hewlett says

Queen Berengere's lips twitched and her fingers plucked out gold threads of the cherubim on the coverlet.¹⁶

In portraying Jehane, Hewlett allows the Abbot Milo, who he says described her 'with the meticulous particularity of his time and temper,' to furnish the details:

The iris of her eyes was wet gray, but ringed with black and shot with yellow, giving so the effect of hot green; her mouth was of

15. Ibid., p. 234.

16. Ibid., p. 236.

an extraordinary dark red colour. . . . The upper lip had the sulky curve; she looked discontented. . . . Her hair was the colour of raw silk, eyebrows set rather high, face a thimble oval, complexion like a pink rose's, neck thimble again. . . . He noticed how tall she was and how slim, save for a very beautiful bosom, too full for Dian's (he tells us), whom else she resembled; how she was straight as a birchtree; how in walking it seemed as if her skirts clung about her knees. . . . She was a silent girl.¹⁷

The abbot gives most of the detail, but Hewlett himself adds the final touch: 'She was a silent girl.' One is reminded of the effect which the familiar touch gave the description of Queen Mary, when Hewlett said: 'She was a little woman.'

The whole story moves with a breathless swiftness that gives a feeling, not only of the tumult of the times, but even more, of the struggle within Richard himself. Scott's The Talisman, filled as it is with the spirit of chivalry, is much broader in scope and shows much greater diversity of plot. This fact tends to lessen the intensity of feeling which is made possible by the narrowing of the subject matter, and using the careful and accurate observation of little facts. In Hewlett's book, the reader is concerned with a definite problem centered in the great struggle within the breast of Richard; a struggle which one feels is brought about by elements in Richard's immediate environment as well as the peculiarities of his innate disposition. One becomes conscious of the development of the plot and character in Hewlett's book as if the people were one's own contemporaries, rather than as knights and kings as in The Talisman.

17. Ibid., p. 8.

The most powerful realistic scene is the death of Richard in the presence of the three women who had marked epochs in his life. Hewlett breathes the very breath of reality into the reactions of these women. Jehane, who already had given so much for love, surrendered her first born son into the keeping of the lawful wife; then after holding Richard's head until the spirit had departed, she put her lips on his and so stayed until she felt him grow cold beneath her warmth. The two other women only wept and watched Jehane between their fingers. As one witnesses the death of this great man, one feels that the scientific method has not hampered the historical novel, but that it has added a definite power which serves as a tangible advantage to the novelist.

CONCLUSION

The English novel, like so many other fields of art and thought, was not untouched by the influence of nineteenth century science. The scientific quest for truth, the accurate observation, the careful recording of facts all left their mark on the techniques of the novel, even when the novelist made no claim to a purely scientific approach. A new realism developed which aimed, in the words of Henry James, to give 'a sharper specification of the signs of sense.' This influence has been found in the work of Maurice Hewlett and although there is no question of raising him to the ranks of great novelists, the new realism has added substance and accuracy to his historical novels. In Maurice Hewlett's hands, I have found the historical novel may command a respect which never could have been given to the purely romantic historical novels of his own day, and this respect is largely due to the realism which was an outgrowth of nineteenth century science.

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