

THE FICTIONAL WRITINGS OF HERBERT QUICK

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THESIS



This is to certify that the
thesis entitled

THE FICTIONAL WRITINGS OF HERBERT QUICK

presented by

Carl L. Keen

has been accepted towards fulfillment
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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sam S. Baskett".

Sam S. Baskett

Major professor

Date November 10, 1967





ABSTRACT

THE FICTIONAL WRITINGS OF HERBERT QUICK

by Carl L. Keen

Once recognized for his writings (and even celebrated for some of them) as well as for his work in the Federal Farm Bureau, Herbert Quick (1861-1925) is all but forgotten today. His writings, nonfiction as well as fiction, have been out of print since 1925. The central question is, should the fiction of this political figure and writer from Iowa continue to be neglected?

In order to answer this question, the present dissertation does what has not been done before. It conducts a systematic chronological examination of all twelve of Quick's fictional books: In the Fairyland of America (1901), Aladdin & Co. (1904), Double Trouble (1906), The Broken Lance (1907), Virginia of the Air Lanes (1909), Yellowstone Nights (1911), The Brown Mouse (1915), The Fairview Idea (1919), We Have Changed All That (1921), and the "Midland Trilogy" which was celebrated in Quick's own day--Vandemark's Folly (1922), The Hawkeye (1923), and The Invisible Woman (1924). In addition, this dissertation draws upon Quick's nonfictional books and articles, his

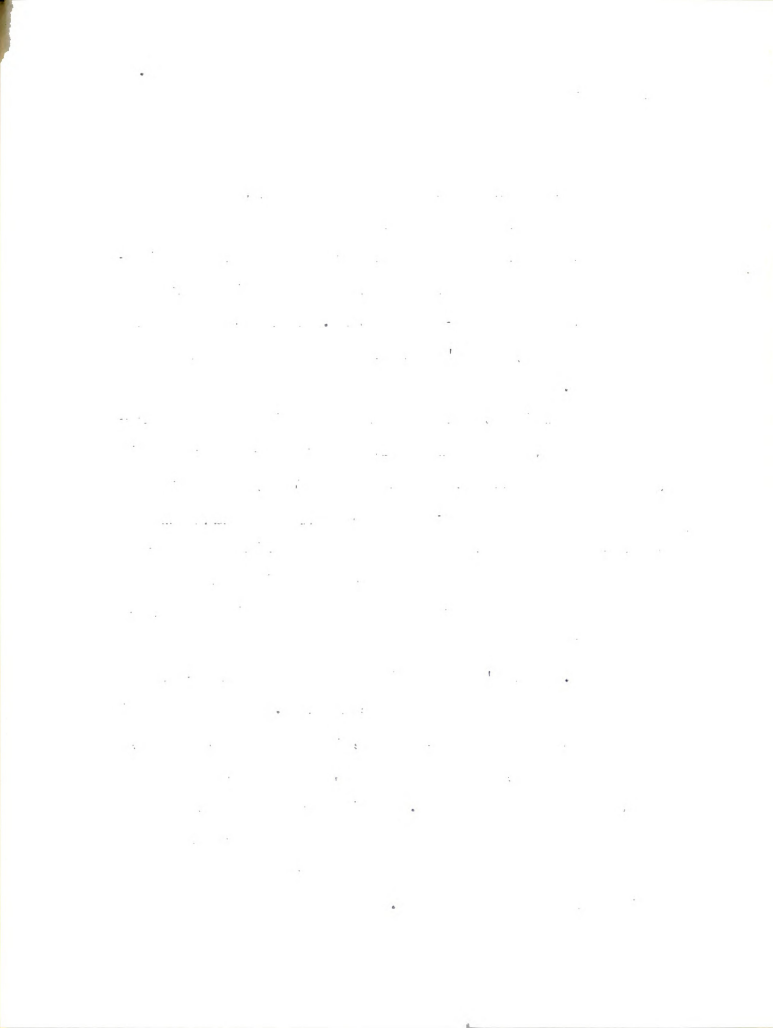
correspondence, and various other materials that shed light on his fictional writings.

The principal findings of this comprehensive survey are that Quick's fiction was indebted to other authors (notably Robert Louis Stevenson, in Double Trouble; Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry George, in The Broken Lance; Geoffrey Chaucer, in Yellowstone Nights; Mark Twain and Moses, in Vandemark's Folly; and Moses, in all) and that Quick was repeatedly concerned with the problem of the American identity. The typical hero of Quick's fiction is an innocent youth, but often this youth lacks a clear sense of his philosophical or occupational identity. In most of the pre-Trilogy works, set in twentieth-century America, Quick's hero is befuddled by the major issues of capitalistic individualism vs. socialistic cooperation, and the city vs. the country. The lack of a clear identity for the hero--in addition to Quick's awkward mixture of literary realism and melodramatic romanticism, and his enthusiastic but undisciplined use of other authors--kept these early works from being reprinted.

It was not until he wrote Yellowstone Nights (1911), which is a coherent work of fiction and the only pre-Trilogy book that should command the interest of literary critics today, that Quick clarified what he believed was the proper American identity. In this exceptional work and in the two semifictional books which followed, The Brown Mouse (1915) and The Fairview Idea (1919), Quick made clear that the

farm was the appropriate place for his youthful, innocent, Adamic hero, for on the farm this American hero should have no fear of the sophistication which Quick associated with the seductive capitalism of the wicked city; on the farm the American would pursue a pragmatic and agricultural education, cooperate with his fellow farmers in a socialistic manner, and thus retain his original simplicity and innocence, next to God-given nature. Like the Unfallen Adam in Genesis, Quick's farmer hero would dress and keep the Garden.

After identifying the ideal American as the agricultural Adam, Quick turned from twentieth-century America (the setting of all his fiction up to 1921, except the Russian novelette he co-authored, We Have Changed All That) to write his most distinguished work, a trilogy reconstructing his American past, in order to interpret the origins and also the development of the American experience, as it was reflected in the history of his own life and region. Quick's Iowa Trilogy tells the three-part story of Adam as given in the Scriptures. First, there is the account of the Unfallen Adam, Cow Vandemark; second, the Falling Adam, Fremont McConkey; and third, the New Adam, Christina Thorkelson. It is a challenge to recall any other single work in American fiction which presents such a full and coherent account of the American identity derived from the Adamic myth.



The present dissertation concludes that although Quick must remain a minor writer he is nevertheless a significant and useful one. Quick is precisely that kind of writer--in the tradition of Emerson's party of Hope, an Adamic writer--who, as R. W. B. Lewis said, "has been frowned quite out of existence" during the middle of the skeptical or pessimistic twentieth century but who still offers, to those critics who seem to be transfixed by the wasteland, "opposite possibilities on which to feed and fatten."¹ Thus, if for no other reason than Quick's presentation of the Adamic American story in the Midland Trilogy--a work which can be a standard to understand and appreciate other writers of fiction (major or minor, pessimistic or optimistic) who have drawn upon the Adamic materials in a less complete, less coherent, or less parallel manner--the fictional writings of Herbert Quick deserve a reconsideration.

¹The American Adam (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), pp. 195-196.

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By

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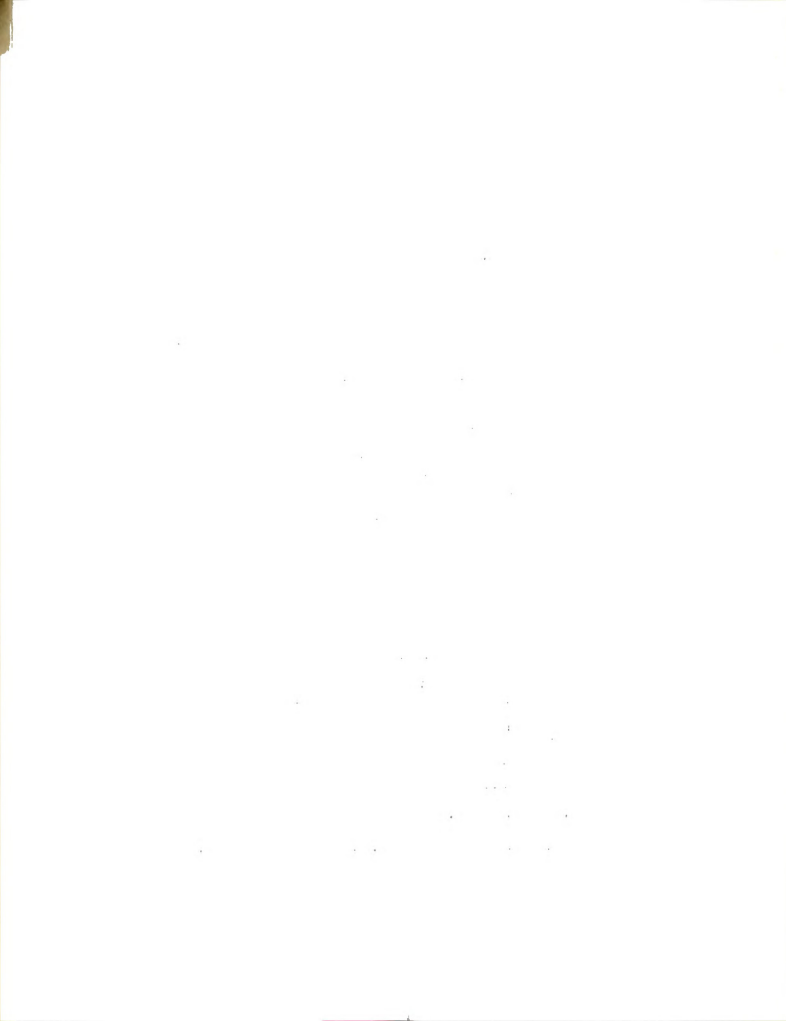
Any research project is indebted to a community of persons, and the present dissertation is no exception to the rule. I have tried to indicate this indebtedness in the bibliography.

In addition, I wish to extend special thanks to my guidance committee, Professors Sam S. Baskett (Chairman), Elwood Lawrence, and C. David Mead. I feel especially grateful also for having had the good fortune and privilege of interviewing Mrs. Raymond N. (Margaret Q.) Ball, the daughter of Herbert Quick.



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INTRODUCTION

Once recognized for his writings (and even celebrated for some of them) as well as for his work in the Federal Farm Bureau, Herbert Quick is all but forgotten today. All of his writings, nonfiction as well as fiction, have been out of print since his death in 1925.¹ While few could deny the importance of his work in the Farm Bureau, which many of his nonfictional writings did so much to found and establish,²

¹Momentary reprints were (1) the nonfictional American Inland Waterways (1909), which is named in the Cumulative Book Index, World List of Books in English for January-September, 1937, and (2) the fictional The Hawkeye (1923), which was reprinted during World War II in a paperback, minus illustrations but in full text, by the Armed Services Editions, Council of Books in Wartime, Inc., a nonprofit organization in New York. A copy of this paperback edition of The Hawkeye is in possession of Herbert Quick's daughter, Mrs. Raymond N. (Margaret Q.) Ball, 45 Elm Lane, Rochester, New York 14610, among various other papers there which will hereafter be cited as the Quick Papers.

²On the semicentennial anniversary of the passage of the Federal Farm Loan Act which created the Bureau, Quick's name was not recalled but the work which he more than anyone else started received proper recognition; in "Land Banks Credited for US Farm Growth," The Milwaukee Journal, Sunday, July 17, 1966, Part II, p. 10, cols. 4-5, it was observed that the Federal Farm Loan Act made it "possible for a man in agriculture today to increase his productivity nearly 400% in half a century," that the twelve banks (which Quick organized) have in fifty years "extended loans of more than 12.5 billion dollars to more than two million farmers," that "these banks, perhaps more than anything else, gave respectability to farm lending," and that the "original intent of the law" (farmers being able in time to pay back the Federal money used to start the banks and to own the banks themselves on a cooperative basis) has been successfully fulfilled.

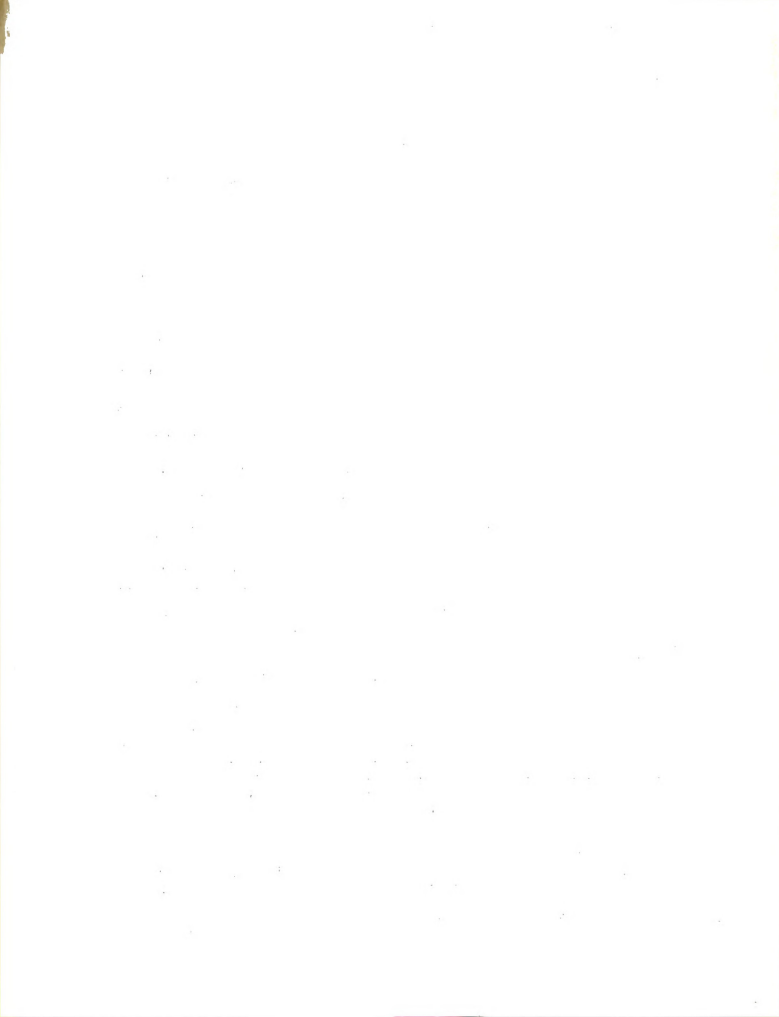
the significance of his fictional writings has been left in doubt. In fact, no comprehensive survey has ever been given of these writings. The primary purpose of this dissertation is to conduct such a survey of his twelve fictional books, in an attempt to assess his importance as a writer of fiction.

Because Quick is not widely known and because his biography plays an obvious role in his fictional writings, it is necessary to begin with a review of the main facts of his life. A product of pioneer stock,³ John Herbert Quick was born October 23, 1861, on a small farm in Grundy County, near Steamboat Rock, Iowa, the son of the second marriage of both his parents, Martin and Margaret (Coleman) Quick.⁴ Herbert spent his boyhood on the farm, where he did his share of the family's work despite having been stricken with poliomyelitis,⁵ but he was not destined to stay there.

³"I come of a race of humble pioneers," Herbert Quick wrote, "We are of the Rondout Valley Dutch, who refused to go on up the Hudson into the domains of the Patroons, but filed off by the left flank and went up to Rondout Valley, and over the divide into New Jersey, and across the Delaware into Pennsylvania. I suppose that celebrated or notorious Indian fighter Tom Quick was one of us. We plunged into the forest away back before the Revolution, and kept ahead of civilization until it overtook us in Iowa, where I was born." Letter of H. Quick to F. F. Van de Water, April 28, 1924, in the Herbert Quick-Bobbs-Merrill Papers (Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana); hereafter cited as the Bobbs Papers.

⁴The marriage of Martin and Margaret produced three daughters and one son: Stella, John Herbert, Margaret, and Helen. Counting the children from Martin's first marriage, Herbert had a total of four brothers and four sisters.

⁵Herbert Quick was not quite two years old when he contracted infantile paralysis, a disease that crippled



While still a farm boy, he became a certified county school-teacher, and he taught fourteen years (1876-1890) near the area of his birth, ending this career as principal in Mason City. Then he became an attorney-at-law in Sioux City (1890-1909), his most noteworthy case being his successful prosecution in 1896 of the Woodbury County "boodlers" (grafters). The high mark of his Iowa days was his term as reform mayor of Sioux City in 1898-1900.⁶

As the century turned, Quick, failing to become a supreme court judge, gradually turned away from state politics and also from his law practice, which he continued on a diminishing part-time basis until 1909, and more and more toward a career in writing. In the first decade of the twentieth century, Quick published several works, both fiction and nonfiction, but it was not until he became the editorial writer and director of Farm and Fireside (1909-1916) that he achieved national importance. It was a direct result of his active and influential interest in

both his feet; for the rest of his life he had to have his shoes especially made, but the disease did not prevent him from walking, normally except for a pigeon-toed effect. Personal interview with Mrs. Raymond N. (Margaret Q.) Ball, in Rochester, New York, April 6, 1966.

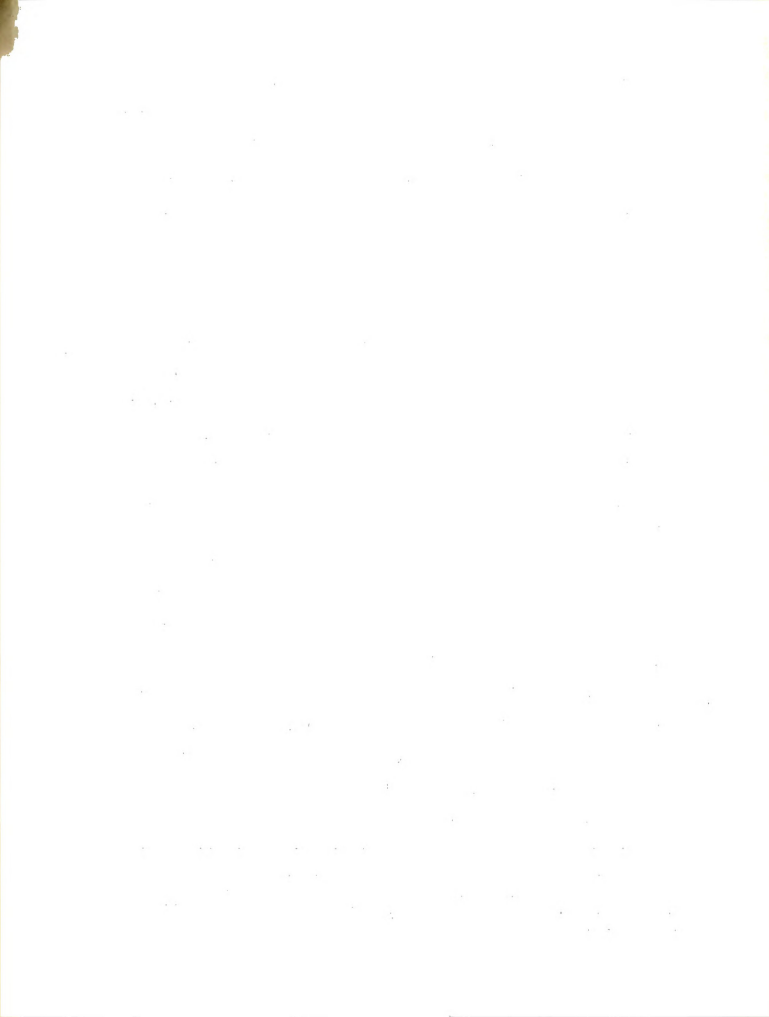
⁶The details of the nineteenth-century part of Quick's life are given in One Man's Life, an autobiography published posthumously in 1925. This book does not, however, treat in detail Quick's careers as attorney and mayor; the best sources for these careers are some of his correspondence and an article written by one of his newspaper friends, Jay Darling, "Herbert Quick: The Man and His Work," Des Moines Register and Leader, August 30, 1908, p. 1. Instead, One Man's Life concentrates on the details of Quick's boyhood and youth in Iowa.



American agriculture that President Woodrow Wilson appointed him in 1916 to an eight-year term on the first Federal Farm Loan Bureau, a position from which Quick resigned in 1919 (when the Bureau's function was well established) in order to devote more of his time to writing, particularly fiction.

Thus, like other Americans who lived during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth, Herbert Quick tried various occupations. This fact immediately suggests a search for identity--a search that did not take place so much during the early nineteenth century and before, when, for example, a farmer's son was more than likely to carry on the family occupation and even to stay on the same farm land. In Quick's case, the search took him to various parts of the nation, from Iowa to the Alabama coast (where he built some cabins to support a land claim) to the editorial office of Farm and Fireside in Ohio, to Indiana (where he frequently met with his publisher, Bobbs-Merrill), to West Virginia (where he conducted horticultural experiments on the farm he purchased and named "Coolfont"), to his office in Washington, D. C., and, in a sense, back to Iowa. During the last several years of his life he was in considerable demand as a public speaker in the United States in places as far apart as New York and Texas.⁷ Quick's search, typical enough, gains significance through its typicalness as it sheds light

⁷It was during a speaking tour that Quick suffered his final heart attacks, at the University of Missouri, May 10, 1925. The Columbia Missourian, Monday, May 11, 1925, p. 1, col. 2.



on the problem of the American identity during the time in which he lived, particularly since the fictionalized version of this quest for his identity as an American is the staple of Quick's fiction.

A year before he died, Herbert Quick was recognized by Syracuse University in a way that in summing up his varied significance offered a contrast to the near oblivion into which he fell so soon thereafter. In 1924, the citation read:

We welcome you, Herbert Quick, as a successful teacher, lawyer, civic leader and editor; a successful administrator also in both national and international spheres of service during the World War; we welcome you as one of our own, already associated with our University by marriage to one of its alumnae;

we welcome you as the nearest of kin to Jacob Vandemark;

and in recognition of your significant and permanent contributions to American literature;

I admit you to the degree of Doctor of Letters and invest you with all the rights and privileges appertaining to that degree.⁸

Quick's significance could then, in 1924, be broadly categorized as cultural and literary. The present investigation focuses on the possibility of the suggested "permanent" significance of Quick's fictional writings, but it bears in mind the inescapable relationship between literature and culture. Writing about his contemporary American culture was more than a passing concern for Herbert Quick.

In addition to hundreds of articles--for the

⁸Letter of January 11, 1966, from James K. Owens, Archivist, Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York 13210.



Newspaper Enterprise Association and the Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance and for such periodicals as World's Work, Reader, Cosmopolitan, Collier's, Saturday Evening Post, and Farm and Fireside--Quick wrote, during the last twenty-five years of his life (1900-1925), a total of eighteen books. Four of these books are nonfictional: American Inland Waterways (1909), On Board the Good Ship Earth (1913), From War to Peace (1919), and The Real Trouble with the Farmers (1924). Twelve of them are fictional: In the Fairyland of America (1901), Aladdin & Co. (1904), Double Trouble (1906), The Broken Lance (1907), Virginia of the Air Lanes (1909), Yellowstone Nights (1911), The Brown Mouse (1915), The Fairview Idea (1919), We Have Changed All That (co-authored with Mrs. Elena Stepanoff MacMahon in 1921, published in 1928), Vandemark's Folly (1922), The Hawkeye (1923), and The Invisible Woman (1924). One is dramatic, There Came Two Women (1924), and one, One Man's Life, is subtitled "An Autobiography."⁹ All these works have been considered during the

⁹Herbert Quick has also been accepted as one of the two co-authors of Mississippi Steamboatin': A History of Steamboating on the Mississippi and Its Tributaries (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1926). However, Quick's daughter, Mrs. Raymond N. (Margaret Q.) Ball, stated unequivocally that his son, Edward Connell Quick, wrote all of this book by himself; letter from Mrs. Ball, March 15, 1966. Moreover, in a letter of May 24, 1966, Edward stated, "in re Mississippi Steamboatin'":

This book was originally suggested by the publisher. My father agreed that he would go over a book written by me and make corrections if necessary. My father died while I was in New Orleans looking for local color.

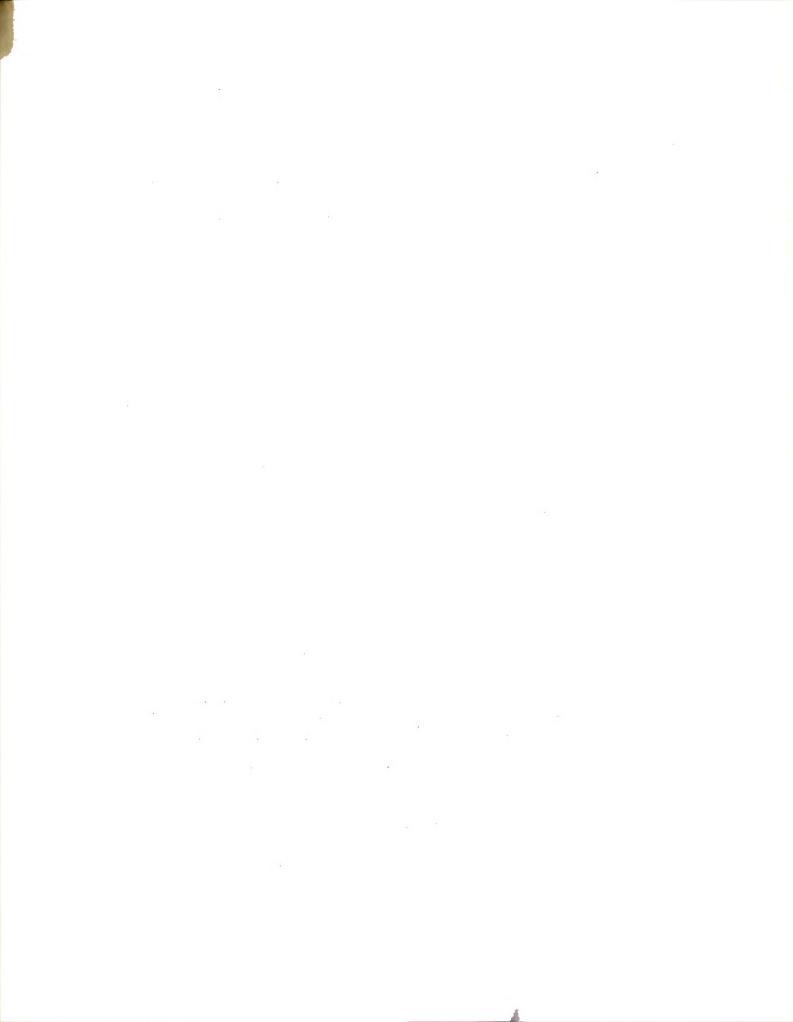
Later I asked the publisher if I should write the book. The reply was affirmative. I wrote the book complete.

preparation of the present paper, but the central question with which the present paper deals is, should Quick's fictional writings be neglected?

All of this is not to say that Quick has been absolutely forgotten since 1925. From time to time his name has cropped up, but, as a glance at the bibliography of this dissertation will show, this posthumous recognition has been practically limited to the state of his birth, Iowa. On July 4, 1933, for instance, a "Program for the Dedication of the Herbert Quick Memorial Schoolhouse"¹⁰ appeared in Grundy Center, the schoolhouse being dedicated in memory of Quick's identity as a rural teacher. A few brief articles on Quick have appeared in the magazine of the State Historical Society of Iowa, The Palimpsest. Only two studies of any considerable length have ever been written on Quick, and both of these are master's theses at the State University of Iowa, done

The contention that Edward was the sole author of the book is also supported by what Mrs. Lucille Cobb (Head, Special Materials Department, The University Library, University of Missouri), in a letter of January 14, 1966, called "the only local newspaper account of . . . the death of Mr. Quick," an account which included the following: "A son . . . is traveling on business somewhere between St. Louis and New Orleans, and has not yet been reached"; The Columbia Missourian (published by the School of Journalism, University of Missouri), Monday, May 11, 1925, p. 1, col. 2. The testimony of Margaret and Edward, the whereabouts and activity of Edward at the very time of his father's death in 1925, the publication date of the book (1926), and, equally important, the lack of any evidence in Herbert Quick's correspondence to indicate that he was even contemplating such a book--all this should be taken to credit Edward C. Quick as the sole author of Mississippi Steamboat'.

¹⁰This "Program" is in the Quick Papers.

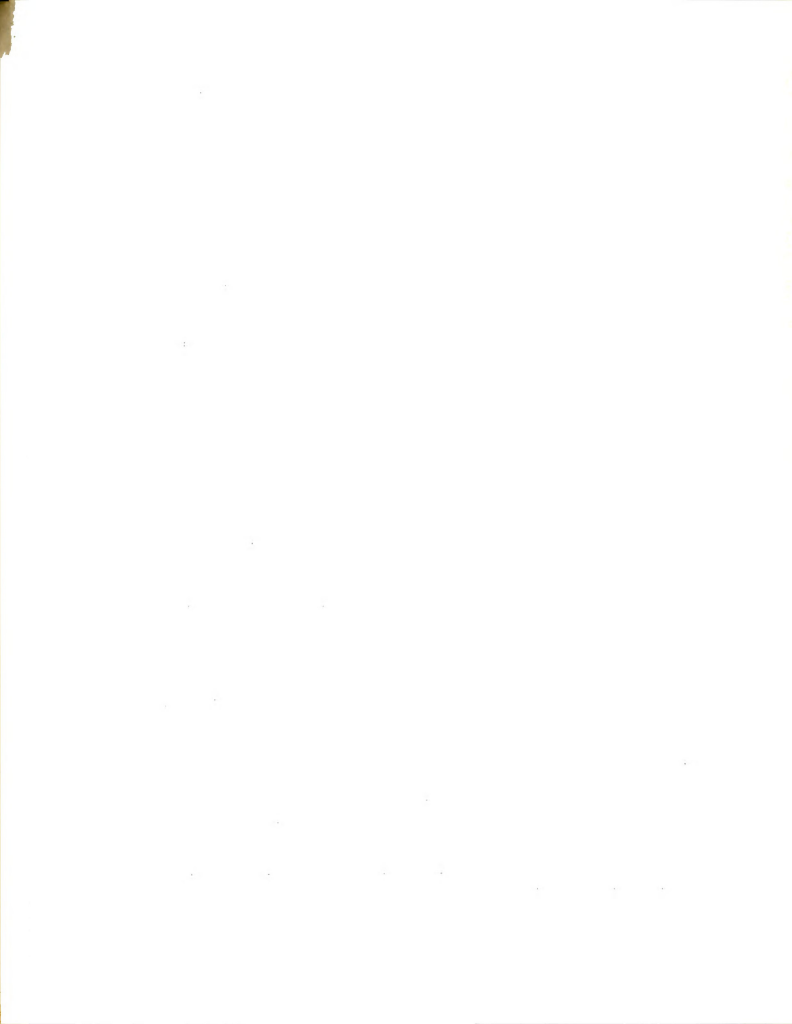


forty-one and twenty-seven years ago, respectively.

The first of these M. A. theses is Clara Ellen Speake's "A List of Dialect Terms from the Works of Hamlin Garland and Herbert Quick" (1926). Although Miss Speake's paper can hardly be called a comprehensive study of the subject, for she only listed about 200 terms from seven of Quick's books,¹¹ this eighty-one page document is nevertheless a suggestive contribution about one aspect of Quick's importance. The other M. A. thesis is Geneva Waters' "Herbert Quick: Social Historian of the Middle West" (1940). As its title indicates, this 117-page report recommends that Quick, in his late fiction (the "Midland Trilogy") and in his One Man's Life, be remembered as a witness-recorder of what actually happened in the Middle West of the 1860's through 1890's as far as social affairs are concerned. With her special interest in discovering historical facts, Miss Waters saw fit to dismiss Quick's early fictional books, usually by spending only a sentence or two on each of these books and once by merely citing a title in her bibliography, as if these early works did not shed any light on Quick's later efforts in fiction. Like Miss Speake, Miss Waters has made a helpful but partial and preliminary contribution to an evaluation of Herbert Quick.¹²

¹¹The seven books from which Miss Speake sampled "dialect terms" are Aladdin & Co., Yellowstone Nights, The Brown Mouse, Vandemark's Folly, The Hawkeye, The Invisible Woman, and One Man's Life.

¹²These M. A. papers have been especially useful on pp. 141-143 of the present paper.



The purpose of this paper is, then, to do what has not been done before. It proposes to undertake a systematic chronological examination and evaluation of the fictional writings of Herbert Quick.



CHAPTER I

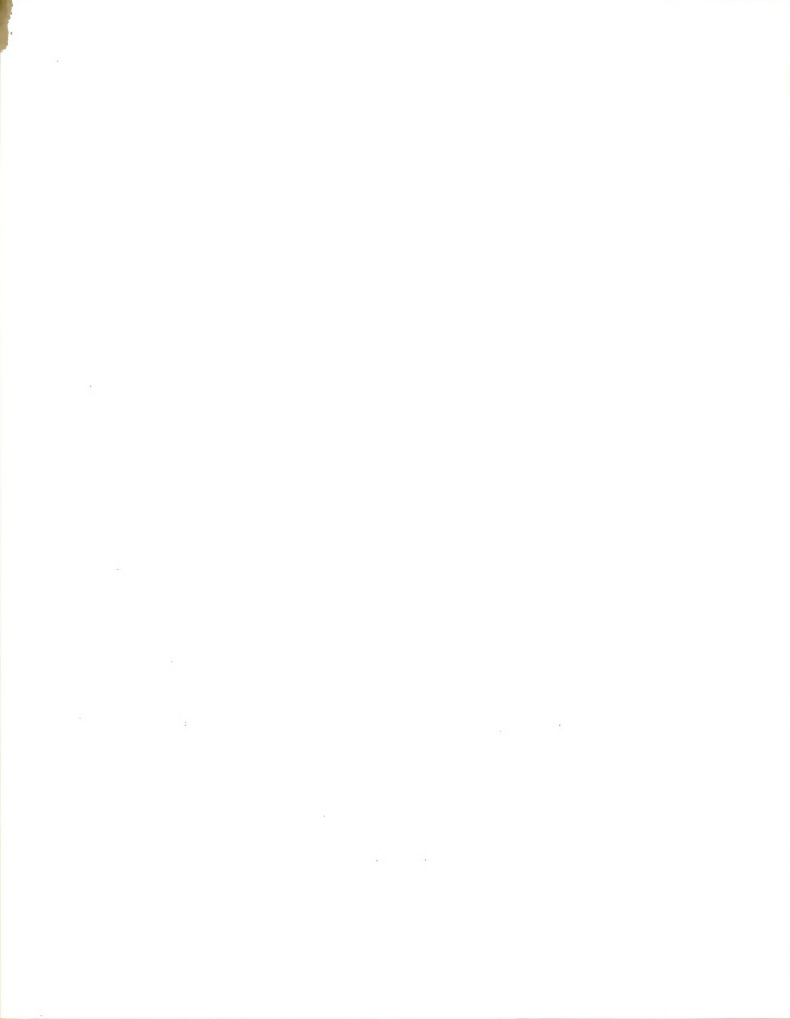
SQUIRREL TRACKS IN LITERATURE, 1901-1906

Late in life Herbert Quick wistfully remarked that his life had been characterized by "following squirrel tracks off into the woods,"¹ by which he meant that various other interesting activities (in schools, the law, in practical politics) had distracted him from his true vocation, writing. Although during his early years the other activities had apparently allowed him time for little more than dabbling in verse, at the turn of the new century, when Quick was thirty-nine, he did manage to begin some notable excursions into literature by writing his first books of fiction. The characters, plots and scenes, and the fictional methods employed in the first three of these books--In the Fairyland of America (1901), Aladdin & Co. (1904), and Double Trouble (1906)--are the subject of the present chapter.

Quick's first book, influenced by Longfellow's Hiawatha,² was written for children, and it holds little or no interest for adults except insofar as it sheds light on

¹"I Picked My Goal at Ten--Reached It at Sixty," American (October, 1922), p. 164.

²"Hiawatha, old Nokomis, the beautiful Minnehaha, and their life in the forest long ago" are mentioned in the lead paragraph of In the Fairyland of America (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1901), p. 13.



Quick's subsequent fiction. In In the Fairyland of America Quick defined both the hero and the basic problem of that hero which would reappear in his later books. The hero is boyish and the problem is whether he should remain boyish. In Quick's first book the hero is called Edgar, an eight-year old boy³ who dreams he is in the "land of faery and fable." Somewhat like Adam before the creation of Eve, Edgar is a lone newcomer in a strange land, ignorant, naive, virtually a blank; his placement in fairyland is intended to expose him to some sort of education.

One of the lessons offered to Edgar during his dream of being in fairyland is that of a theoretical condition of education itself. Professor Meda, one of the fairies, explains this peculiar condition by saying that before he can teach his new pupils, they must all unlearn or forget whatever their mothers or anyone else had previously taught them. Thus Meda's "Inversion" lesson, the first for all his new pupils, is to teach them to stand on their heads, since their mothers had taught them the opposite stance. His "Lamentation" lesson, teaching the pupils to cry, is based on the same principle and also on the premise that crying develops the lungs and supplies the air with water for the rain. Meda does present a doctrine of fresh beginnings, but he

³Edgar's age is not specified, but in the revision of the manuscript of this book, Quick substituted the name Edgar for Edward, the name of his son, who was eight at the time. Herbert Quick Manuscript Collection, Vol. III, Des Moines, Iowa. Cited hereafter as Quick Manuscripts.



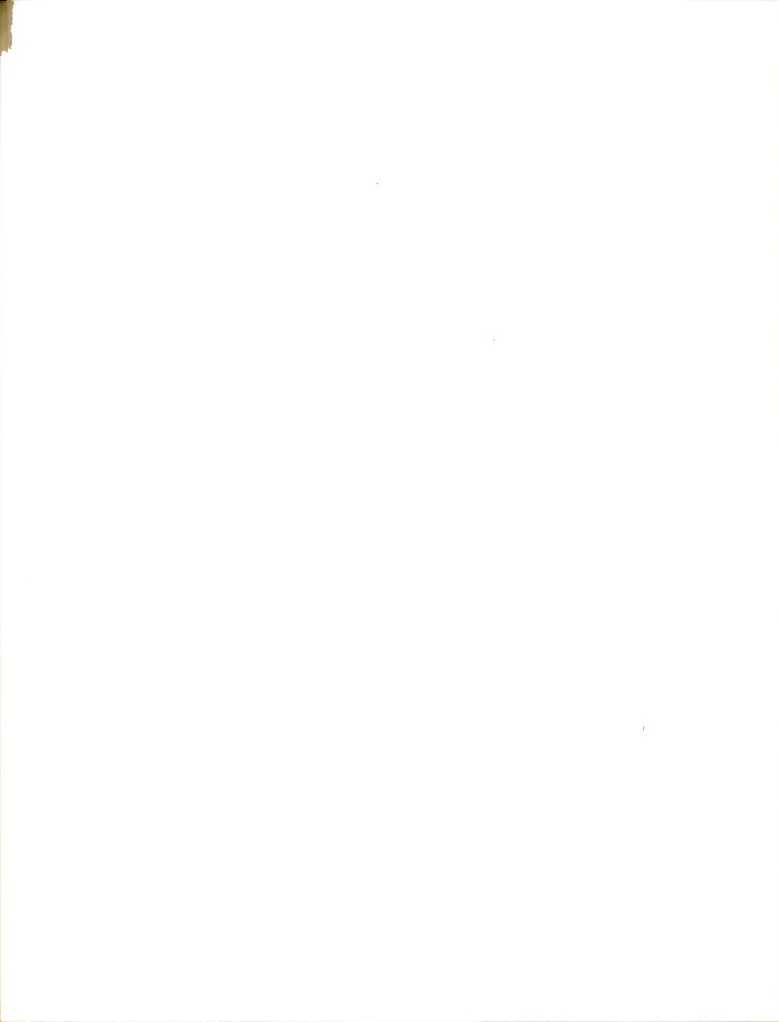
also values memory, as he himself keeps fairyland's oral historical records in what he calls "memory sticks."

In one of these "memory sticks" is another lesson for Edgar's consideration, "The Legend of Pearl Hair," which tells how she became friend to all in the woods except the bear; how she became stranded one evening and heard the bear growling; and how the fireflies, though small creatures, formed a union of numbers to make the fire of which bears are afraid. The lesson of the legend is clear: socialistic cooperation saved the good Pearl Hair.

This pro-collectivist legend seems to Edgar a satisfactory solution to the problem he had heard stated previously in "The Ballad of the Wild-Cat," in the twenty-four stanzas of which Wild-Cat confessed the successful criminal individualism but consequent personal unhappiness of its robber-hero-narrator. Yet Professor Meda, the keeper of the "sticks," does not accept the happy wisdom of "The Legend of Pearl Hair," for when he delivers his "Lecture on Baldness" he explains to Edgar that bald people, such as Meda, are much more intelligent than such thick locks as Pearl Hair. Meda's scoffing at Pearl Hair is a chief example of the disagreement among the guides who would educate Edgar.

As Edgar continues his adventures in fairyland, narrated by a third person in prose and verse, he is subjected more and more to an education in the principles of natural law. For example, Edgar hears the Thunder-bird's song:

The Thunder-bird sits in his hole in the tree,
That the world hangs upon like a nut,



And lays down the law
 Moving slowly his claw:--
 'It is well to be merciful--but
 A mouse should not squeak
 At the pinch of a Beak
 Which he knows must in reason be shut,
 Or the Owl's meat be let go uncut
 Uncut!
 Or the Owl's meat be swallowed uncut!'⁴

Edgar's unwillingness to accept such an interpretation of nature is illustrated in the sea scene of Chapter XII.

At sea (to which he is transported magically), Edgar witnesses the "game" rivalry of the dolphin vs. the flying fish. The loser of this game gets eaten or (if dolphin) goes hungry. When Edgar suggests to Flying Fish that he should not play such a "dangerous game," Fish says that there is no choice in the sea, that they must play--for otherwise people would talk and bad feelings would result. Edgar further suggests that Flying Fish announce "King's excuse" to gain respite from the game--fair play--but Fish says that he would be eaten just the same. With boyish bewilderment Edgar leaves this scene, but the narrator's voice is quite clear in the concluding lines:

And the dolphins and flying fish went on with their game of tag, just as they had done for ages, the dolphins always It, the flying fish always chased, and no King's excuse or any other excuse to stop it.⁵

In the last chapter Edgar returns to Professor Meda's medicine lodge, where he hopes to learn a final solution to the problem with which he has been presented.

⁴"What the Thunder-Bird Says," In the Fairyland of America, p. 162.

⁵In the Fairyland of America, p. 148.



There, Meda explains to Edgar such concepts as the germ theory of disease; germs, he says, come from Germany, and the human body is a battlefield for white corpuscles vs. germs. Meda himself takes sides, singing encouragement to the white corpuscles in a fight to the death that must in the natural law of things be. Meda also makes a comparison to the "Anglo-Boer War." Apparently converted to the survival-of-the-fittest doctrine, Edgar spends the second of the three wishes previously granted him to acquire not a pleasure boat (as was the case with his first wish) but an armored cruiser, sailing on which he, together with his Pukwudjie Indian friends, meets a "war-party of great ships." A battle ensues. Meda is seen flying away clasp- ing a shell. Their ship begins to sink. Edgar could use his last wish to escape but what would become of his friends on board? He is more concerned to help his fellows than to save his own skin. The ship does sink, and everything gets mixed up. Edgar thinks himself a flying fish, playing tag, but wakes up from the entire dream, in his own bed, safe and sound, never able to find his fairy friends again who lived in the place he would call "Pukwudjie Ravine."

What interested Quick in his first book, in addition to providing an amusing bedtime story for children, was the education of his boy hero. Although at the end of the "Tale of the Pukwudjies," as the book is subtitled, Edgar has learned little more than the names of the animals and fairies, and some fabulous explanations for certain natural

phenomena such as rain, he has at least been confronted with the rival social beliefs of collectivism vs. individualism. In not allowing Edgar a firm commitment to either of these beliefs, however, the narrator leaves the theme of the tale unsatisfactorily suspended, the character of Edgar basically unchanged. At the end of the tale as at the beginning, Edgar is a wishful-thinking, romantic boy. Quick evidently could not quite decide whether his fictional hero should be a romantic collectivist or a romantic individualist.

Quick was also interested, in In the Fairyland of America, in making a contribution to native American literature. As the narrator expressed it at the end of this tale which was influenced by Longfellow and also by the tales Quick had heard during his own boyhood, "There may be more elves and gnomes and pixies in Europe than in America, but there isn't a Pukwudjie in Europe."⁶ Quick wished that the Pukwudjie would become known as the Great American Fairy, an original creation.⁷ Yet this did not occur.

The principal failure of Quick's first book derives from its lack of plot and character development. Its individual episodes are but loosely linked by the mere presence of the boy hero and are without a total design. Edgar is placed in a vague fairyland scene to learn, but he learns little beyond the existence of alternative social beliefs;

⁶In the Fairyland of America, pp. 189-190.

⁷"I Picked My Goal at Ten--Reached It at Sixty," American (October, 1922), p. 163.

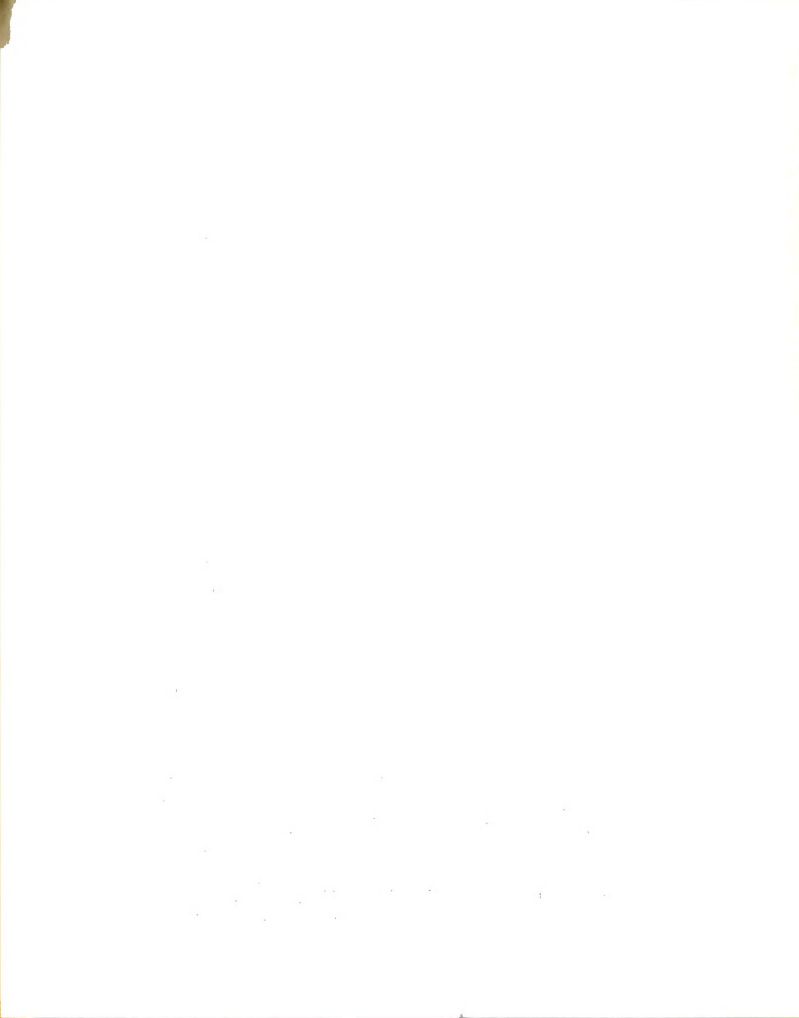


he takes no stand. Even children, for whom this book was primarily written, are confused about the point of the tale, particularly when it is compared to the well-defined quest in a story of similar genre, such as The Wizard of Oz.

If Quick had written nothing else besides In the Fairyland of America, he would hardly be worth reconsidering as an author. A reading of his first attempt in fiction is, moreover, only important as a prelude to an understanding of his later fiction, mainly because the first book depicts in the simplest form the character Quick chose for his hero. Quick's second and third fictional works treat the progressively less simple aspects of this boy hero by presenting him in a species of fiction that was meant not for children only but for adults as well.

Unlike In the Fairyland of America, which was dedicated to its author's mother because it was she who had first led his steps into the land of fable, Quick's second book, Aladdin & Co.: A Romance of Yankee Magic (1904),⁸ derived from his adult experience in Sioux City. As Quick moved from fable to what he called romance, he moved from a magical dream world of boyhood to a magical real world of history. Since Aladdin & Co. was influenced by a segment

⁸Aladdin & Co. was copyrighted by Henry Holt and Company in 1904 and by the Bobbs-Merrill Company (which became Quick's principal publisher) in 1907; it was reprinted by Grosset and Dunlap at an unspecified date but probably in 1909 or shortly thereafter since the title page of this edition names Virginia of the Air Lanes, a recent publication of Quick's which appeared in 1909. Subsequent page references in the present paper are to the Grosset and Dunlap edition of Aladdin & Co.



of Sioux City history which Quick knew, it will be helpful to review that history before analyzing what Quick did with it fictionally.

Founded in 1854 and located where the Big Sioux and Floyd Rivers flow into the Missouri, Sioux City became a major point in river commerce and remained an important frontier town after the Civil War, as the railroads assumed a larger role in developing the West. In the 1880's Sioux City experienced its greatest boom, and enthusiasts believed that the town would become the greatest metropolis in the entire Midwest. But this boom reached its peak in 1890, when John Peirce, realtor and developer, built his stone mansion, at 29th and Jackson Streets, which was, and is (a museum since 1959), a monument to Victorian architecture as well as a magnificently gaudy ornament to the boom.

Although Herbert Quick was not on hand in the Sioux City of the 1880's, he arrived there in time to see Peirce's new show-place in 1890 and to witness the subsequent fluctuations in real estate values during the 1890's. As a lawyer, Quick had opportunity enough to study the past and present activities of Sioux City realtors, bankers, railroad men--the capitalistic "syndicate"--even though he was deprived of the chance to participate therein on a scale as grand as Peirce's. Chapter III in Quick's book is aptly named "Reminiscently Autobiographical."

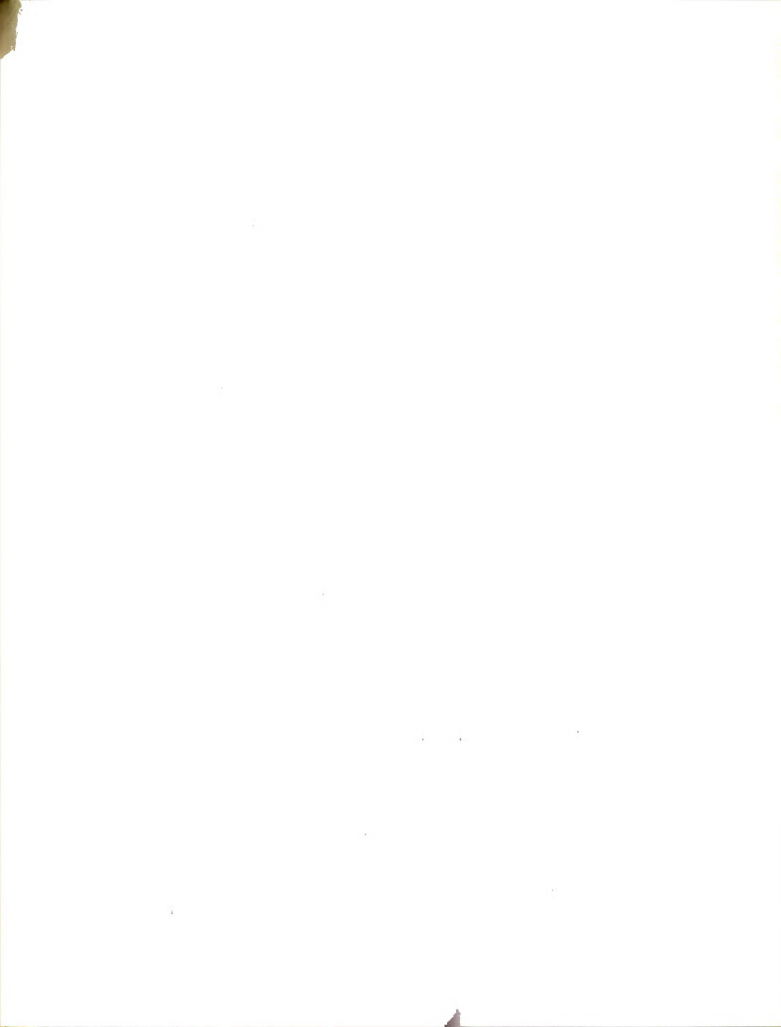
In the book, Sioux City is called Lattimore, and it is most probably John Peirce who is called James Elkins,



the "man who made Lattimore" (p. vi). Albert Barslow, the "friend and partner" of Jim Elkins, is the narrator and also the character who most resembles Quick himself (with the major exception that Quick was not in Sioux City during the 1880's). The other characters are also briefly identified at the beginning in a list which helps make clear what the story is to be about: the creation, "not so very long ago," of the "Western town of Lattimore" by certain capitalists.

The first capitalist to demand attention is Barslow, because he is the narrator of the entire story; or, as he says: "My mental and sentimental state is of importance in this history, I think, or I should not make so much of it" (p. 3). Barslow introduces himself, in Chapter I, as a young man of twenty-three, a delegate sent wide-eyed from Western farmlands to the National Convention in Chicago.⁹ He has a conflict of interests: the practical politics of the Convention and Alice's "newly-reciprocated love," which he associates with art. He shuns his political responsibility, drawn to art: "When one comes to consider the matter, an art gallery is a wonderfully different thing from a national convention!" (p. 3). Further, the manner in which Barslow describes his experience in the art gallery (where he spends much of his Chicago time) suggests that he is not only "sentimental" but a romantic figure who, like Tom Sawyer and young Herbert Quick, has had a good deal of

⁹On the autobiographical parallel, cf. One Man's Life, pp. 354-356.



practice in identifying himself with various formula heroes of the imagination:

As I looked on them, the still paintings became instinct with life. Yonder shepherdess shielding from the thorns the little white lamb was Alice, and back behind the clump of elms was myself, responding to her silvery call. The cottage on the mountain-side was ours. The lady waving her handkerchief from the promontory was Alice, too; and I was the dim figure on the deck of the passing ship. I was the knight and she the wood-nymph; I the gladiator in the circus, she the Roman lady who agonized for me in the audience; I the troubadour who twanged the guitar, she the princess whose fair shoulder shone through the lace at the balcony window. . . . Doves cooed for me from the clumps of thorn . . . (pp. 3-4).

Barslow demonstrates his ability to fit his fantasies to actual situations when, in the art gallery, he overhears what he suspects are the overtures of the seduction of a young rural maiden called Josephine by a slightly older city-slicker called "Sir John." Barslow catches the hint of the theme of temptation from the first snatch of conversation he overhears:

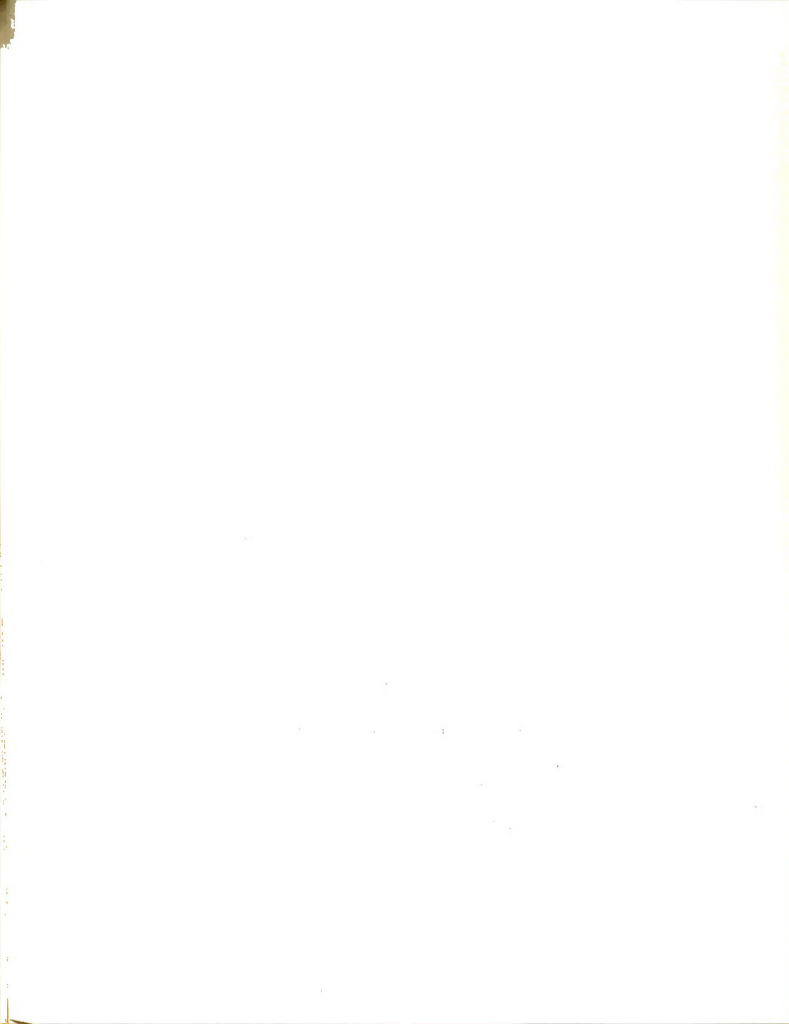
'I was brought up to think,' I remember to have heard the fair stranger say . . . 'that the surest way to make a child steal jam is to spy upon him. I should feel ashamed.'

'Quite right,' said he, 'but in Europe and in the East, and even here in Chicago, in some circles, it is looked upon as indispensable, you know.'

'In art, at least,' she went on, 'there is no sex. Whoever can help me in my work is a companion that I don't need any chaperon to protect me from. If I wasn't perfectly sure of that, I should give up and go back home.'

'Now, don't draw the line so as to shut me out,' he protested. 'How can I help you with your work?' (pp. 6-7).

Quick's readers, in the first decade of the twentieth century, would not have missed the significance of this



passage, aware as they were of the dangers of the city which confronted the newly arrived girl from the country. Sometimes, as in the case of Dreiser's Sister Carrie, the maiden became a mistress, though apparently not much against her will. At other times the girl was economically forced to frankly trade her charms in a brutish manner, as was the fate of Dulcie in O. Henry's "An Unfinished Story." But the worst case of all was that of the girl who, dreaming of becoming a legitimate success in the city, was seduced by a seemingly helpful agent who lured her into the barred-window, locked-door houses of ill fame, in which prisons she had to supply for as long as she lasted the scarlet pleasures from which a diseased and lonely death was the only escape. The villainous agents often began their seductive operations in art galleries and on the backstages of theaters, as well as in the frightfully popular ice cream parlors.¹⁰

A battle cry of the righteous defenders of maidenhood, in this decade before World War I, was General William Booth's "For God's sake do something!"¹¹ This is quite possibly what Albert Barslow, in Quick's book, had in mind when he overheard the talk, in the art gallery, about jam and sex

¹⁰A collection of essays on this problem, written by various persons, appeared in 1910 under the title, Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls; or, War on the White Slave Trade: A Book Designed to Awaken the Sleeping and to Protect the Innocent, With an Astounding Report of Chicago's Vice Commission, by Ernest A. Bell, "Secretary of the Illinois Vigilance Association--Superintendent of Midnight Missions, etc."

¹¹Quoted on the title page and the cover of Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls.



and offers to help; and Barslow decides, rather quickly, to do something about it: he actually follows the young couple to a "free-and-easy and distinctly Bohemian" restaurant (p. 10), despite a non-romantic voice within him which says: "' . . . such things happen every night in such a city. It's a part of the great tragedy. Don't be Quixotic!'" (p. 11). Nonetheless, Barslow's dominant Quixotic feelings tell him that "Sir John" is very possibly a villain. After all, not only has "Sir John" had experience in various cities of the "East" but also he sports a black beard; this "smooth, dark, and passionate wooer with the vibrant voice" definitely needs a watchful eye; Josephine, the "good American girl [from the country who] may be in danger," obviously needs protection, Barslow feels (p. 11).

At the restaurant Barslow's fears are confirmed as he reports such bits as the following: "'No,' I heard her say . . . ; 'not here! Not at all! Stop!'" (p. 14). The patience of Barslow, who casts himself in the role of a detective-chaperon-knight for a damsel in distress, lasts until all the other customers leave, and then the critical moral moment arrives: "Only we three were there. I wondered if I ought to do anything" (p. 16). But he is here spared doing anything as Josephine, of her own free will, rushes away from the scene with the resolution, Barslow is glad to learn, of returning to her country home in the West.

Since the first two chapters of Aladdin & Co. are set in Chicago, they are a contrast to nearly all the



following chapters, set in the rural West. Moreover, at the beginning, Chicago is associated with temptation and sin; the rural West, innocence and goodness. Since the rest of the story is about the development of a Western town practically from scratch, Quick's intention is to investigate the origins of evil in American life.

The plot develops slowly and with an intended sense of melodramatic mystery. The narrator, particularly in the first third of the book, repeatedly refers to the "air of mystery" (p. 77), or to the "future [which] loomed so mysteriously bizarre" (p. 73). Throughout he views and reports the unfolding events as though they were being performed on a stage; for examples: Captain Tolliver speaks "in a stage whisper" (p. 77), and it "was Mr. Cornish, who took the center of the stage now" (p. 108). The dialogue, too, often has a stiff, stagey quality, and it is only at the end of the story that the narrator seems to recognize his over-playing of this feature:

'Alice,' said Josie, under her breath, 'you go, please! Say to him that I cannot see him--now! Oh, why did he follow me here?'

'Josie,' said Alice dramatically, 'you don't mean to say that you are afraid of this man! Are you?'

'No, no!' said the girl doubtfully and distressfully; 'but it's so hard to say "No" to him! If you only knew all, Alice, you wouldn't blame me--and you'd go!'

'If you're so far gone--under his influence,' said Alice, 'that you can't trust yourself to say "No," Josephine Trescott, go, in Heaven's name, and say "Yes," and be the wife of a millionaire--and a traitor and scoundrel!'

As Alice said this she came perilously near the histrionic standard of the tragic stage . . . (pp. 334-335).



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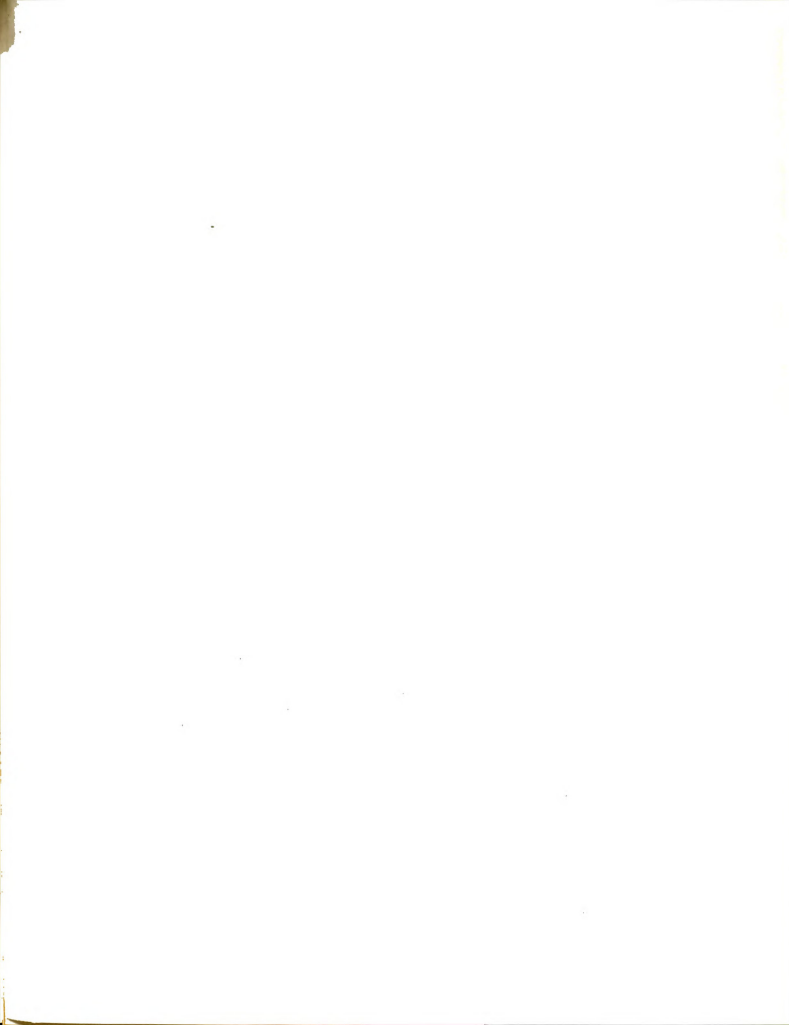
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The melodramatic tone is not much relieved by the realistic dialect of Captain Tolliver, a stereotyped Southern gentleman. But a slight change of pace is offered by the style of some of the telegrams and epistles and the Herald newspaper items which convey, matter of factly, information otherwise inaccessible to Quick's first-person narrator.

As the story unfolds, in this mixture of melodrama and literary realism, so are the motives revealed of the "Persons of the Story," who are either for or against, and sometimes both for and against, developing a town. Some motives are rather briefly given, as in the case of Halliday, the "railway magnate," whose support of Elkin's company derives from his capitalistic and matter-of-fact desire to defeat the rival "Pendleton System" in a race to determine the survival of the fittest in the West. The motives of the major characters are of course treated in more detail and with a view toward their possible moral significances.

The melodramatic romanticism of Al Barslow helps to explain his motive for participating in the scheme of Jim Elkins to develop Lattimore and other towns in the West. Al and Jim had been boyhood friends, and when they meet again, accidentally on a train, they are like two long-lost Tom Sawyers, recalling their days of playing pirates. Al's wife, Alice, explains his feelings for his boyhood days: "'He looks back upon his pirate days as a time of Arcadian simplicity, 'Untouched by sorrow, and unspoiled by sin'" (p. 49). Al accepts Jim's program with the rather



contradictory notion that developing the complexities of a town will enable him somehow to recapture the simplicity of his boyhood. Even when Jim talks about taking the money of what he calls the "suckers" out West--talk which should offend Al's Quixotic sensibilities--Al is seemingly blinded by Jim's other talk about sheer mental power and piratical fantasies:

All his skimble-skamble talk about psychology and hypnotism, and that other rambling discourse of pirate caves and buccaneering cruises, made me feel sometimes as if I were about to form a partnership with Aladdin, or the King of the Golden Mountain. If he had asked me, merely, to come to Lattimore and go into the real estate and insurance business with him, I am sure I should have had none of this mental vertigo . . . (p. 73).

To Al, capitalism seems good because of its association with the romantic activities of boyhood, and worth pursuing.

Al is so charmed by the call of the new adventure, the chance to relive his boyhood, that he is quite willing to surrender whatever he has established in the recent past of his supposed manhood, a surrender reminiscent of Thoreau's plea for simplicity by a sweeping away of the trivia of the past. Barslow puts it this way:

That last quiet winter will always be set apart in my memory, as a time like no other. It was a sitting down on a milestone to rest. Back of us lay the busy past--busy with trivial things, it seemed to me, but full of varied activity nevertheless. A boy will desire mightily to finish a cobhouse; and when it is done he will smilingly knock it about the barn floor. So I was tearing down and leaving the fabric of relationship which I had once prized so highly (p. 72).

Although Al and Alice take some of their old "stuff (as the Scriptures term it)" with them to Lattimore, they go with



altogether "high hopes" in the appropriate season of spring-time, a time for new beginnings, to make a home out West, "for weal or woe" (p. 73).

The happy aspects of the new adventure are indicated in several ways. As the town booms, so does Al's happy romanticism. He feels that his new-found fortune must be the result of magic, and he compares himself to one who found and traveled the mythical northwestern passage to the riches of the Far East:

Again I seemed in a partnership with Aladdin; and fairy pavilions, sylvan paradises, bevvies of dancing girls, and princes bearing gifts of gold and jewels, had all obeyed our conjuration. I could have walked down to the naphtha pleasure-boat and bidden the engineer put me down at Khorassan, or some dreadful port of far Cathay, with no sense of incongruity (p. 113).

Nor does Al have a "sense of incongruity" when he compares that most important physical feature of the boom, the building of the railway, which was the result of capitalistic paper-work, to the manifestations of magic:

And so, in due time, it came to pass that, our Aladdin having rubbed the magic ring with which his Genius had endowed him, there came, out of some thunderous and smoky realm, peopled with swart kobolds, and lit by the white fire of gushing cupolas and dazzling billets, a train of carriages, drawn by a tamed volcanic demon, on a wonderful way of steel . . . (p. 152).

The magician centrally instrumental in bringing about this development, Jim Elkins (alias Aladdin), is depicted in various lights by the happy and admiring Barslow. Jim is a master card-player "in the Game with the World and Destiny" (Chapter XIII). Jim is also a "Titan," as Tolliver



calls him, and is likened to a cosmic creator:

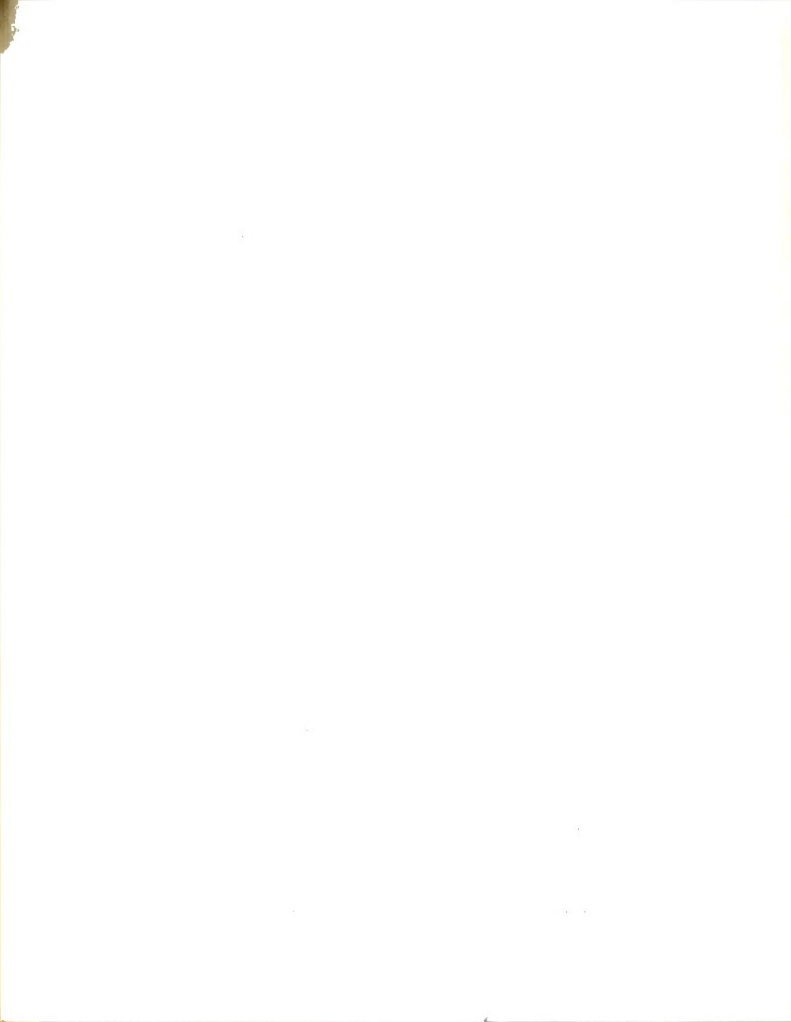
If the town be considered as a quiescent body pursuing its unluminous way in space, Mr. Elkins may stand for the impinging planet which shocked it into vibrant life . . .

There was Jim's first impact, felt locally, and jarring things loose. Then came the atomic vivification, the heat and motion, which appeared in the developments which we have seen taking form. After the visit of the Barr-Smiths, and the immigration of Cornish, the new star Lattimore began to blaze in the commercial firmament . . . (pp. 120-121).

As "president of a real railway," Jim has the "power to establish town-sites and give them names" (p. 153); this he does in Chapter XIV, on "Railroads and Christenings," with the notion that names may "have an influence for good or evil" and that the "naming of the towns may be important as building the railroad" (p. 159). Jim bestows upon town-sites the names Josephine, Cornish, Antonia, Barslow, etc.--after the names of his friends who accompany him on this tour through the rural West. Whatever the name Jim chooses for a site, that was henceforth its name.

Jim as an Adamic name-giver and cosmic creator is not, however, without skeptical viewers. Collectively, these skeptics play the role of stating an anti-capitalistic and anti-town theme, but this theme is often mixed with its opposite (pro-capitalistic, pro-town) theme. Josie, for example, has doubts about capitalism which bring to mind Henry George's ideas about unearned increment, but the narrator tries to gloss over such doubts:

. . . while we won and won, nobody seemed to lose [in the cosmic card game]. Josie spoke that night of fortunes which people had not earned; but surely



they were created somehow; and as the universe, when the divine fiat had formed the world, was richer, rather than poorer, so, we felt, must these values so magically growing into our fortunes be good, rather than evil, and honestly ours, so far as we might be able to secure them to ourselves (p. 138).

Josie, moreover, expresses her doubts to her farmer-father and to the capitalist Jim Elkins:

'But, pa, we're not adapted to town life and towns,' urged Josie. 'I'm not, and you are not, and as for mamma, she'll never be contented. Oh, Mr. Elkins, why did you come out here, making us all fortunes which we haven't earned, and upsetting everything?' (p. 134).

Jim's answer is that Josie and her family simply cannot stay in their "rural Amaryllis, sporting in Arcadian shades," cannot "parley with fate," and that their participation in the town's development will give them a mature experience, will push them "out of the nest" (pp. 134-135).

Josie--who is depicted throughout this story as an ideal inexperienced female, courted by Jim (and by J. Bedford Cornish)--is not the only voice of skepticism. Alice is another, as when before the developments she looks upon the "pretty" and "lovely" natural scenery (the ravine, the clear stream called Brushy Creek, the prairie) and asks whether developing it would "spoil" it (pp. 47-48). But most important in this regard is General Lattimore. As "History incarnate" (p. 156), he offers the contrast of past experiences, a criticism of the present activities, and a warning for the future:

'You young men,' said he, 'are among the last of the city-builders and road-makers. My generation did these things differently. We went out with arms in



our hands, and hewed out spaces in savagery for homes. You don't seem to see it; but you are straining every nerve merely to shift people from many places to one, and there to exploit them. You wind your coils about an inert mass, you set the dynamo of your power of organization at work, and the inert mass becomes a great magnet. People come flying to it from the four quarters of the earth, and the first-comers levy tribute upon them, as the price of standing-room on the magnet! . . .

'Not only that,' went on the General, 'but people begin forestalling the standing-room, so as to make it scarcer. They gamble on the power of the magnet, and the length of time it will draw. They buy to-day and sell to-morrow; or cast up what they imagine they might sell for, and call the increase profit. Then comes the time when the magnet ceases to draw, or the forestallers, having, in their greed, grasped more than they can keep, offer too much for the failing market, and all at once the thing stops, and the dervish-dance ends in coma, in cold forms and still hands, in misery and extinction! (pp. 160-161).

The General's prophecy comes nearly true in Lattimore, beginning with the death of Josie Trescott's father, who, having traded his healthy farm life for life in the dubious town, had degenerated from a respectable family man into an alcoholic and customer at houses of ill repute.

Although it is the probating of Mr. Trescott's estate which pricks the speculative bubble, it is his death scene which exposes the boom's less charming aspects. The romantic Barslow is particularly appalled by the exposure of the slums and dens of vice which had festered darkly while the sunny side of the town had boomed in merry mania. He describes his reaction to the dark side in the following manner:

There was an indefinable horror about the place, which so repelled me that nothing but my obligation could have held me there. The lights were dim, and at first I could see nothing more than that the



sides of the room were divided into compartments by dull-colored draperies, in a manner suggesting the sections of a sleeping-car. There were sounds of dreadful breathings and inarticulate voices, and over all that sickening smell. I saw, flung aimlessly from the crepuscular and curtained recesses, here the hairy brawn of a man's arm, there a woman's leg in scarlet silk stocking, the foot half withdrawn from a red slipper with a high French heel. The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows had opened for me, and I stood as if gazing, with eyes freshly unsealed to its horrors, into some dim inferno, sibilant with hisses, and enwrapped in indeterminate dragon-folds--and I in quest of a lost soul (pp. 227-228).

The lost soul is that of the farmer who turned capitalistic speculator, Bill Trescott.

The origins of such evil (rarely described in such a daring style by Quick, what with the "high French heel" and all) are associated with temptation as introduced by foreigners or outsiders to the simple rural folk. Bill Trescott's ruin is basically a consequence of his failure to reject Elkins' proposition, which lured him away from his life on the farm, despite Josie's doubts and warnings. Only a few characters, such as Biddy Collins, who are in the story for the purpose of contrast, are sufficiently strong to resist the temptation for capitalistic speculation as offered by Elkins & Co. and, indeed, flee "from the presence of the tempter" (p. 91). Elkins, moreover, is not above tempting Josie to break an oath to herself as he courts her and tries to enlist her support in what he considers a civilizing of the rural community:

'Well, I was just leading up to a statement of what we lack,' continued Jim. 'It's the artistic atmosphere. We need a dash of the culture of Paris



and Dresden. . . . Come out and supply our lack. You owe it to the great cause of the amelioration of local savagery . . .

'I've abandoned the brush.' [said Josie].

'Take it up again.'

'I have made a vow.'

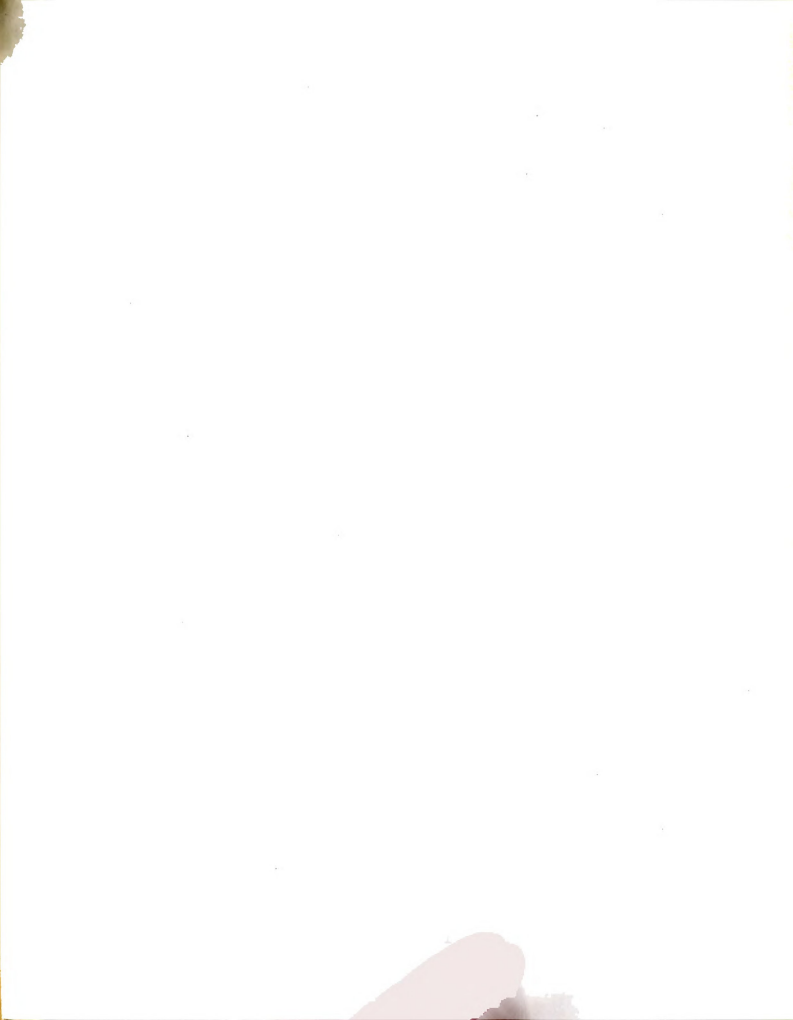
'Break it!'

She refused to yield, but was clearly yielding . . .
(pp. 135-136).

Yet, even though Elkins is the leader of the capitalistic forces of temptation, he is not the villain of the piece. This was Quick's problem in his fictional investigation of the origins of evil: on the one hand, Elkins is characterized as one who tempts others into self-betrayal and away from innocence; on the other, a creator of civilization, of art and culture, of maturation in the West. If Elkins is half bad, he is also half good. Highlighting this problem, Quick employed another character, one who is closely associated with Jim Elkins, J. Bedford Cornish, and both were apparently inspired by the historical person John Peirce. Quick evidently recognized that Peirce had done both good and bad deeds in Sioux City, and so split him, as if he were some kind of amoeba, into the fictional characters Jim Elkins, who is both good and bad throughout much of the story but who is finally just good, and J. Bedford Cornish, who clearly represents what Quick considered bad.

Cornish, whose first name is John (the "Sir John" of the introductory chapters, where he was viewed as the would-be seducer of a rural maiden), attracts inordinate notice when he arrives in Lattimore:

. . . the last person to alight from the train--a tall, sinewy, soldierly-built youngish man, who wore an



over-coat of black, falling away in front, so as to reveal a black frock coat tightly buttoned up and a snowy shirt-front with a glittering gem sparkling from the center of it. On his head was a shining silk hat--a thing so rare in that community as to be noticeable, and to stamp the wearer as an outsider. His beard was clipped close, and at the chin ran out into a pronounced Vandyke point. His mustaches were black, heavy, and waxed. His whole external appearance betokened wealth, and he exuded mystery (p. 74).

Although, incredibly, Barslow here and for a while hereafter fails to recognize the "Sir John" he had studied so closely in Chicago, Captain Tolliver gives a stage direction about the importance of Cornish:

'Did you-all notice that distinguished and opulent-looking gentleman who got off the train this evening?' said he in a stage whisper. 'Mahk my words, the coming of such men, his coming, is fraught with the deepest significance to us all . . . ' (p. 77).

Like Elkins, Cornish is a tempter, only more evilly so, as defined by the innocent Western community. For example, whereas Elkins tempts Josie to take up art again, as already indicated, Cornish in his courting tempts her, unsuccessfully, to imbibe an alcoholic beverage (p. 166). Unlike Elkins, however, Cornish makes a fetish of clothes, and in this respect the latter is nearly the same character as Barr-Smith, the foreign capitalist from England who also intrudes upon the innocent Westerners (whose suspicions are aroused by even the hyphenated name). Elkins knows them both, since both are in his company, but between Barr-Smith "and Cornish there was the stronger sympathy of a common understanding of the occult intricacies of clothes" (p. 100). In this same passage the tricky or careless use of a



pronoun, at the beginning of a paragraph, creates the impression that, although the pronoun ("He") probably refers to Barr-Smith, it might stand for Cornish as well:

'He'll expect something in the way of birds and bottles,' observed Elkins; 'but they won't mix with the general society of this town, where the worm of the still is popularly supposed to be the original Edenic tempter' (p. 100).

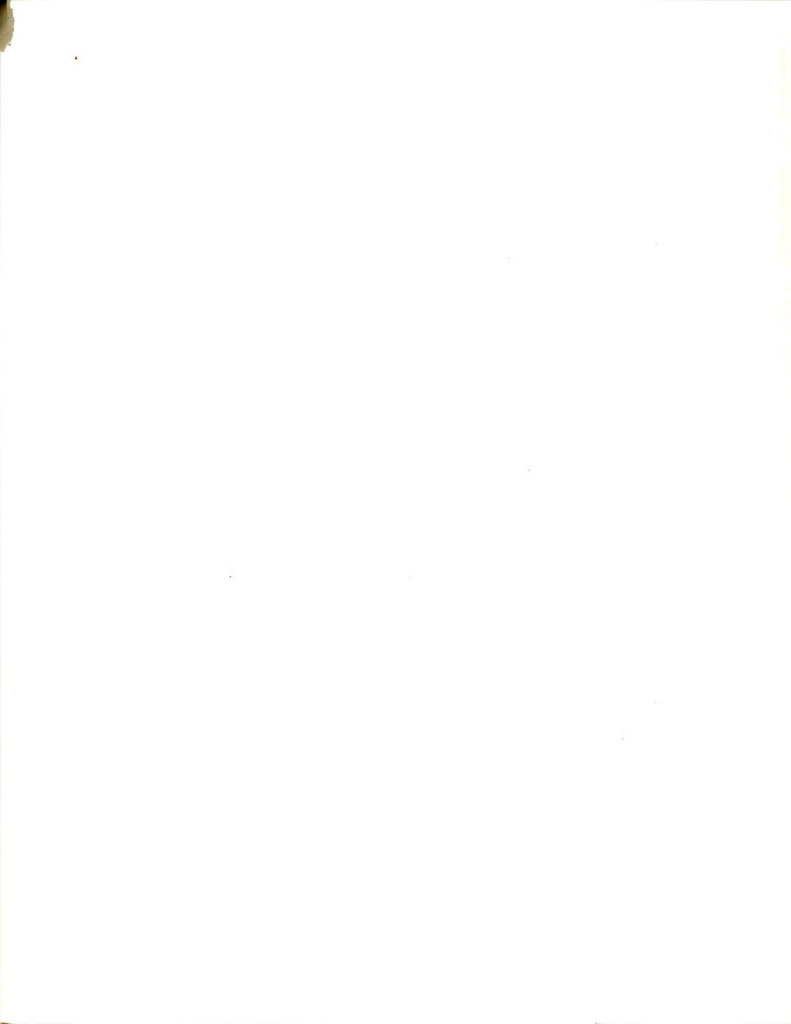
This passage occurs in the Chapter X, "We Dedicate Lynhurst Park" where Jim Elkins, the Adamic name-giver as well as dedicator, attempts a compromise between the accepted moral laws of the rural folk and the wishes of the newly arrived "Edenic tempter"--"I guess we'll have to make it a temperate sort of orgy [continues Elkins], making up in the spectacular what it lacks in spirituousness" (p. 100).

The "spectacular" has a lot to do with clothes.

Barr-Smith, like Cornish, makes a "religion" of what began mythically as a fig leaf, as indicated in the following passage (which was also influenced by Quick's reading of Carlyle):

As for the men of Lattimore, any one of them would as soon have been seen in the war-dress of a Sioux chief as in this entirely correct costume of our British visitor. We walked about in the every-day vestments of the shops, banks, and offices, illustrating the difference between a state of society in which apparel is regarded as an incident in life, and one rising to the height of realizing its true significance as a religion. Mr. Barr-Smith bowed not the knee to the Baal of western clothes-monotone, but daily sent out his sartorial orisons, keeping his windows open toward the Jerusalem of his London tailor, in a manner which would have delighted a Teufelsdröckh (p. 104).

Barr-Smith and Cornish are equally devils, or disciples of the devil, who disturb the rural bliss of the American



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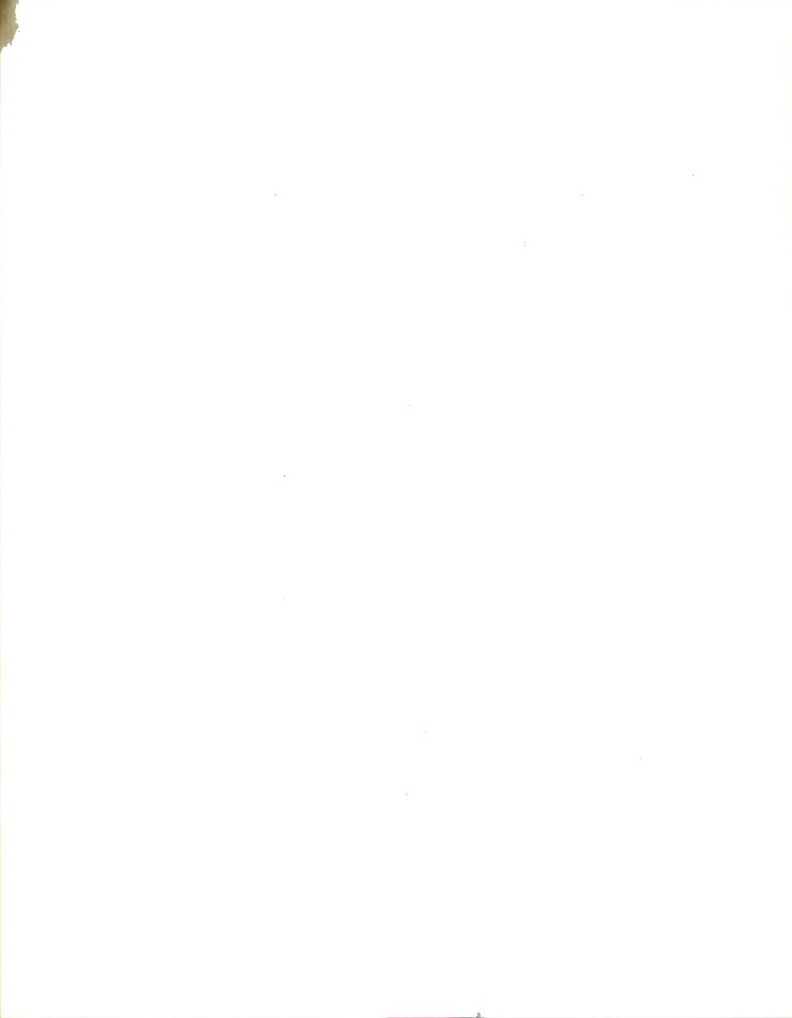
'He'll expect something in the way of birds and bottles,' observed Elkins; 'but they won't mix with the general society of this town, where the worm of the still is popularly supposed to be the original Edenic tempter' (p. 100).

This passage occurs in the Chapter X, "We Dedicate Lynhurst Park" where Jim Elkins, the Adamic name-giver as well as dedicator, attempts a compromise between the accepted moral laws of the rural folk and the wishes of the newly arrived "Edenic tempter"--"I guess we'll have to make it a temperate sort of orgy [continues Elkins], making up in the spectacular what it lacks in spirituousness'" (p. 100).

The "spectacular" has a lot to do with clothes. Barr-Smith, like Cornish, makes a "religion" of what began mythically as a fig leaf, as indicated in the following passage (which was also influenced by Quick's reading of Carlyle):

As for the men of Lattimore, any one of them would as soon have been seen in the war-dress of a Sioux chief as in this entirely correct costume of our British visitor. We walked about in the every-day vestments of the shops, banks, and offices, illustrating the difference between a state of society in which apparel is regarded as an incident in life, and one rising to the height of realizing its true significance as a religion. Mr. Barr-Smith bowed not the knee to the Baal of western clothes-monotone, but daily sent out his sartorial orisons, keeping his windows open toward the Jerusalem of his London tailor, in a manner which would have delighted a Teufelsdröckh (p. 104).

Barr-Smith and Cornish are equally devils, or disciples of the devil, who disturb the rural bliss of the American



Westerners by introducing the ways of the world.

But although both "Cornish and Barr-Smith [are] the visible representatives of the 'world'" (p. 106), it is Cornish who carries the symbolic, rather mythical, load of villainy at the end of the story and is indispensable in revealing what Quick finally wanted to say about morality. For, when the speculative bubble begins to burst, Cornish indicates his desire to betray the confidence of the investors in the town's developments by escaping with their money. So determined is Cornish to commit this betrayal that he "proudly" refuses even to discuss the matter with his partner, Jim Elkins, and will betray him, too, if necessary. Jim, who is presented with his greatest temptation in the story (to follow or not to follow Cornish's course of action), decides to reject treason, to remain true to the townsfolk who trusted him and his grand scheme of development, and to fight Cornish: "'There isn't treason enough in all the storehouses of hell to balk or defeat us'" (p. 287). Jim thinks that the "tropics" would be an appropriate consignment for such a "poisonous devil" as Cornish (pp. 293, 303).

So Elkins and Cornish part company, Elkins emerging as the hero of the story because of his loyalty, Cornish as the villain because of his treason. Cornish leaves the scene with his immorally acquired millions; Elkins stays to face the consequences of financial depression. And though Elkins manages to salvage his mansion in Lynhurst Park, he is much happier in looking forward to marrying Josie--as



Quick resolves the love plot melodramatically.

In the last chapter, "The End--and a Beginning" (XXVI), Quick allows his narrator, Barslow, to moralize:

The disposition to moralize comes on with advancing middle age. . . . The financial cycle was complete. The world had passed from hope to intoxication, from intoxication to panic, from panic to the depths, from this depression, ascending the long slope of gradual recovery, to the uplands of hope once more . . . (pp. 329-330).

Barslow says that the capitalistic way of development, particularly in the "newer and more progressive lands" of the world (p. 330), is like an inescapable law of nature. Given such a law, the book says in effect, one can obey it in all its cyclical phases, as did the loyal and therefore moral Elkins, who endured the financial storms as well as enjoyed the sunny boom, or one can behave as did the immoral Cornish.

Aladdin & Co. presents several outstanding problems. Not only does this "Romance of Yankee Magic" have a curious and often awkward mixture of melodramatic, realistic, and mythical elements and techniques, but also it has some contradictory premises. Stated in a brief syllogistical form, these premises are: if capitalism, then boyhood; if boyhood, then innocence; and if capitalism, then the experienced (non-innocent) way of the world. The problem becomes: if capitalism, then what--innocence or experience? Also, the subject of art is injected into the innocence-experience conflict, and art in Aladdin & Co. is associated with experience and, strange as this may sound, with innocence



as well.

Quick's entanglement with these problems, though not particularly admirable, is somewhat understandable in the light of his sources. On the one hand, he drew upon the historical experience of the typical capitalistic development of a Western town. On the other, he depended, too much, on literary techniques, such as the Aladdin metaphor, which he got from story-books associated in his mind with boyhood innocence and from other books, such as Sartor Resartus, associated with experience. The attempted combination of such elements and values resulted in the stiff, flat, melodramatic characters of this romance.

Aladdin & Co. does make clear that Quick was concerned with these problems and that, especially, he wished to investigate in fiction the subject of capitalism. What he discovered in this second "squirrel tracking" is that melodramatic capitalists have both good and evil potentialities, that an inherent duality existed in the subject and needed pursuing in his next work of fiction.

Quick's next work was entitled "The Occultation of Florian Amidon," which, after its serialization in Cosmopolitan in 1905, was published in book form under Quick's more appropriate title, Double Trouble; or, Every Hero His Own Villain (Bobbs-Merrill, 1906). Dualities galore characterize this work from start to finish. There is the use of verse and prose, melodramatic speech and realistic dialect, external appearance and reality, internal



consciousness and unconsciousness, capitalist as hero and capitalist as villain.

Told in the third person, Double Trouble is a Dr. Jekyll-and-Mr. Hyde story about Florian Amidon, whose other self, Eugene Brassfield, becomes dominant not by drinking a potent concoction of wondrous chemicals but by submitting to the hypnotic charms of Madame le Claire, a "professional occultist." At the beginning of the story, Amidon is depicted as a young, respected bachelor and banker in Hazelhurst, Wisconsin. The practical townspeople see only his "outer husk," for, as the narrator confides, Amidon likes poetry, which is somehow impractical. Moreover,

It was good business to allow Hazelhurst to harbor its illusions; it was excellent pastime and good spiritual nourishment for Amidon to harbor his; and one can see how it may have been with some quixotic sense of seeking adventure that he boarded the train (p. 5).

It is on this vacation train ride that Amidon receives a blow on the head and mysteriously finds himself addressed as Mr. Brassfield.

Thus begins the search, which constitutes a major portion of the story, to find out just who Brassfield is. By degrees, and with the help of Madame le Claire and her German-scientist father (Professor Blatherwick), Amidon learns doctrines and vocabulary that suggest Freudianism, and discovers that Brassfield is an unscrupulous but highly successful capitalist in Bellevalle, Pennsylvania. When Amidon discovers that he and Brassfield are one person, his problem as hero is to master the villain within.

The gayety of tone running throughout the story suggests that Quick enjoyed exploring the problems of dual-personality, and of dualities as such. One of the most obvious pairings is that of prose and verse. Each chapter is in prose and is headed by a short verse supposedly quoted from some authentic source but actually composed by Quick.¹² Each verse, moreover, deals with some sort of duality; a few examples follow. From Chapter I:

Deep in the Well where blushing hides the shrinking
 and Naked Truth,
 I have dived, and dared to fetch ensnared this Fragment
 of tested Sooth;
 And one of the purblind Race of Men peered with a
 curious Eye
 Over the Curb as I fetched it forth, and besought me
 to drop that Lie:
 But all ye who long for Certitude, and who yearn for
 the Ultimate Fact,
 Who know the Truth and in spite of Ruth tear piecemeal
 the Inexact,
 Come list to my Lay that I sing to-day, and choose
 betwixt him and me,
 And choosing show that ye always know the Lie from the
 Veritee!

--The Rime of the Sheeted Spook (p. 1).

From Chapter V:

Now, Red-Neck Johnson's right hand never knew his left
 hand's game;
 And most diverse were the meanings of the gestures of
 the same.
 For, benedictions to send forth, his left hand seemed
 to strive,
 While his right hand rested lightly on his ready
 forty-five.
 'Mr. Chairman and Committee,' Mr. Johnson said, said he,
 'It is true, I'm tangled up some with this person's
 property;
 It is true that growin' out therefrom and therewith to
 arrive,

¹²Helen Quick Dillon's note in "Poems by Herbert Quick," typed by Helen Quick Dillon (Herbert's sister) December 25, 1933, found in the Quick Papers.

Was some most egregious shootin' with this harmless
 forty-five:
 But list to my defense, and weep for my disease,'
 said he;
 'I am double,' half-sobbed Red-Neck, 'in my personal-
 ity!'

--The Affliction of Red-Neck Johnson (p. 33).

From Chapter X:

When Adam strayed
 In Eden's bow'rs,
 One little maid
 Amused his hours.
 He fell! But, friend,
 I leave to you
 Where he'd have dropped
 Had there been two!

--Paradise Rehypothecated (p. 78).

Flippancy is what the verse has in common with the
 prose, which is almost always melodramatic. Thus the meeting
 of Amidon with Elizabeth Waldron (the girlfriend of Brass-
 field) in Chapter IX, "In Darkest Pennsylvania":

Amidon waved a contemptuous rejection of the notes,
 and, casting a despairing glance at Madame le Claire,
 walked over toward his fate. He could have envied the
 lot of the bull-fighter advancing into the fearful
 radius of action of a pair of gory horns. He would
 gladly have changed places with the gladiator who
 hears the gnashing of bared teeth behind the slowly-
 opening cage doors. To walk up to the mouth of a
 battery of hostile Gatlings would have seemed easy,
 as compared with this present act of of [sic] his,
 which was nothing more than stepping to the side of a
 carriage in which sat a girl, for a place near whom
 any unattached young man in Bellevue would willingly
 have placed his eternal welfare in jeopardy (p. 73).

Thus too Amidon's meeting with Daisy Scarlett, "a
 young woman of fervid complexion and a character to match,"
 in the chapter entitled "The Strawberry Blonde": "Fate . . .
 seemed to have in store for him an extraordinary introduc-
 tion, for instantly he was aware of the descent upon him of



a fiery comet of femininity" (p. 240).

Realistic dialect sometimes interrupts the melodrama, as in the passage on the corrupt labor leaders in Chapter XVII:

Mr. Zalinsky, his eyes gleaming with gratification, thought the sum named might possibly suffice.

'Good!' said Alvord. 'And now come up and see the next mayor [Brassfield].'

'What's de use?' asked Zalinsky. 'Don't we know him all right? Ain't it all fixed? I want to git busy wit me end of deliverin' de goods.'

'Mr. Brassfield's views on labor--' began Alvord, but Sheehan interrupted him.

'Your word goes wid us!' said he. 'Ye've convinced us Brassfield's the laborin' man's frind. What say, Zalinsky?'

'So!' said Zalinsky. 'Ve better git to work over in de fourt' ward' (p. 195).

Sometimes the use of realistic speech helps create the impression of a stereotyped if not melodramatic character, as in Chapter V, "Subliminal Engineering," where the German professor analyzes Amidon's condition:

'It iss a case . . . of dual pairsonality. . . .
'Oh, dere are many such! Te supchectife mind, te operations of vich are normally below te theshold of gonsciousness, suddenly dakes gontrol. Pouf! you are anodder man! You haf been Smidt; you are now Chones. As Chones you remember notting of Smidt. You go on, guided by instinct, ant te preacquired semi-intellichence of auto-hypnotismus--' (pp. 36-37).

The main theme of the story is the necessary repression of capitalistic villainy. There is no doubt that Amidon considers his alter ego a villain:

'Friends!' sneered Amidon. 'I tell you, the whole thing [Brassfield's running for mayor] is hypocrisy and graft. That villain Brassfield has a scheme for stealing the streets . . . ' (p. 223).

"The only doubt" that Amidon allows himself is to what

extent he is "morally responsible for Brassfield's wrong doings" (p. 288). But whatever Brassfield's villainy in the past, Amidon as hero resolves to make reforms in the future. Under no circumstances, he says, should a Brassfield be let loose in any man.

However, the narrator offers a rather surprising defense for Brassfield by indicating that he is a practical man, who adapts to his environment and whose behavior is determined by it:

Mr. Brassfield is psychologically incapable of deviating much from the course marked out by the average ethics of his surroundings. This subconscious mind which--as Professor Blatherwick so clearly explained to us--normally operates below the plane of consciousness, happens, in his case, to be abnormally acting consciously; but it is still controlled by suggestion. The money-making mania being in all minds, he becomes a money-maker. The usual attitude of society toward all things--including, let us say, women, poetry, politics, and public duty--is one into which the Brassfield mind inevitably fell. The men on whom any age bestows the accolade of greatness, are those who embody the qualities--virtues and vices--of that age. Your popular statesman and hero is merely the incarnate Now . . . (p. 207).

In this preachy and serious tone (the narrator often stops to preach and have brief talks with himself), the narrator tries to make Brassfield understandable and even to suggest a little sympathy for him.

Because of this sympathy, the character of Brassfield as presented in the story should be examined again. Unlike the Sawyerish capitalists in Aladdin & Co., Brassfield is down to earth, realistic. His talk, for example, is to the point:

'I'm glad you know of that little whim of Edgington's. But about this contract. Now, I usually look after these things myself, and do them by days' work. But if I am forced to take this office of mayor, I sha'n't be able to do this--won't have the time: and I'll want you to do it. Perhaps I'd better give you a check on account now--say on the terms of the Rogers' job? All right, there's five hundred. That settles the contract. Now with that off our minds, let's talk of the political situation . . . ' (pp. 179-180).

Brassfield lives neither in a dreamy past nor in some utopian future. He lives in the down-to-earth, practical present. He is an example of Quick's realistic capitalist. He is a contrast to Amidon, who is an example of Quick's romantic or melodramatic capitalist.

The story says that the romantic capitalist is a hero and that the realistic capitalist is a villain. Yet there is double trouble, and this was Quick's problem. Quick was caught between recognizing the emerging literary realism (with its use of dialect, interest in the here and now, and practical behavior--in which style Quick's realistic capitalist emerged) and a reluctance to give up the past. Quick seemed to want to preserve the good old romantic capitalist as much as William Dean Howells wanted to dispense with romanticism altogether. Yet, at the same time, Quick could not but treat his romantic character humorously, in "flippant prose."

Although Double Trouble is not a book that one would willingly reread, and it is doubtful that it will ever be reprinted, it nevertheless provides an insight into the relationship between Quick's use of fiction and the

development of his social ideas. Just as hypnosis was a method for the "wretchedly inexperienced" Amidon to discover the potentialities of his own character, so writing fiction was a way for Quick to explore his evaluations of the heroes and villains in American culture.

In summary, all three of the books discussed in this chapter--In the Fairyland of America, Aladdin & Co. and Double Trouble--were for Quick explorations, experimental "squirrel tracks" in fiction. It is noteworthy that all three deal with capitalism and express mixed emotions on this subject. On the one hand, Quick seemed to accept capitalism as the natural and inescapable way of the world; on the other hand, he seemed dissatisfied with capitalism and all that which he associated with it--the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, the profit motive, urbanization, sexual seduction, unconscious urges, experience. Such a mixture of attitude toward his subject, in addition to an awkward mixture of literary methods, did not make a viable fiction.

The literary methods of romance, melodrama, and realism were all available to Quick and he used them in a way often exactly backwards to that which might have made a better fiction. In the case of Aladdin & Co. he began with knowledge based on his actual experience in and study of Sioux City, yet he did not write a realistic story, preferring instead the use of melodramatic and romantic techniques derived from the stereotyped stuff he had read. In

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a letter or a page from a manuscript. The text is written in dark ink on aged, slightly yellowed paper. The handwriting is fluid and continuous, with many small, connected letters. The text is arranged in several paragraphs, with some lines indented. The overall appearance is that of a historical document or a personal letter.

the case of Double Trouble he began with a formula derived from his reading of Robert L. Stevenson, yet tossed into this framework some realistic elements which, in isolation, may be judged credible. In both cases, the grafting, if it may be called that, is, unfortunately, a botched job.

The character Quick chose for his hero in his first three books was a romantic one, a boyish, Adamic figure, an innocent subjected to some aspect of capitalistic experience, yet Quick did not make convincing how this hero changed as a result of his experience. It is even questionable whether this hero did truly change, Quick being overwhelmed, apparently, by his problem of how to keep his hero pure and moral during the challenge of experience. Moreover, Quick's attitude toward this romantic hero is often expressed in such a way as to make it difficult to take the hero of these first three books seriously.

After writing Double Trouble, with its romantic but humorous hero, what Quick needed was to investigate a possibly serious hero. Quick attempted to employ a serious hero in his very next book of fiction, which will be analyzed in the first part of the following chapter, even though he had yet to find a fictional method which would carry the weight of his need.

CHAPTER II

NOVEL AND ROMANCE, 1907-1909

In these years, 1907-1909, his last years as a resident of Sioux City, Herbert Quick published two books of fiction, The Broken Lance (Bobbs-Merrill, 1907) and Virginia of the Air Lanes (Bobbs-Merrill, 1909). The first of these books, which are to be analyzed in the present chapter, is what Quick called a novel, and the second is what he considered some kind of romance.

Of The Broken Lance, Quick said (in 1922): it is "the best and most searching sociological novel I ever wrote, or, I think, I ever shall."¹ However that may be, Quick framed his "searching" in a plot that cannot be considered unique, for at the end of the Grosset and Dunlap edition of Quick's own Aladdin & Co. there is an advertisement about Harold Morton Cramer's Hearts and the Cross, which runs as follows:

The hero is an unconventional preacher who follows the line of the Man of Galilee, associating with the lowly, and working for them in ways that may best serve them. He is not recognized at his real value except by the one woman who saw clearly. Their love story is one of the refreshing things in recent fiction.

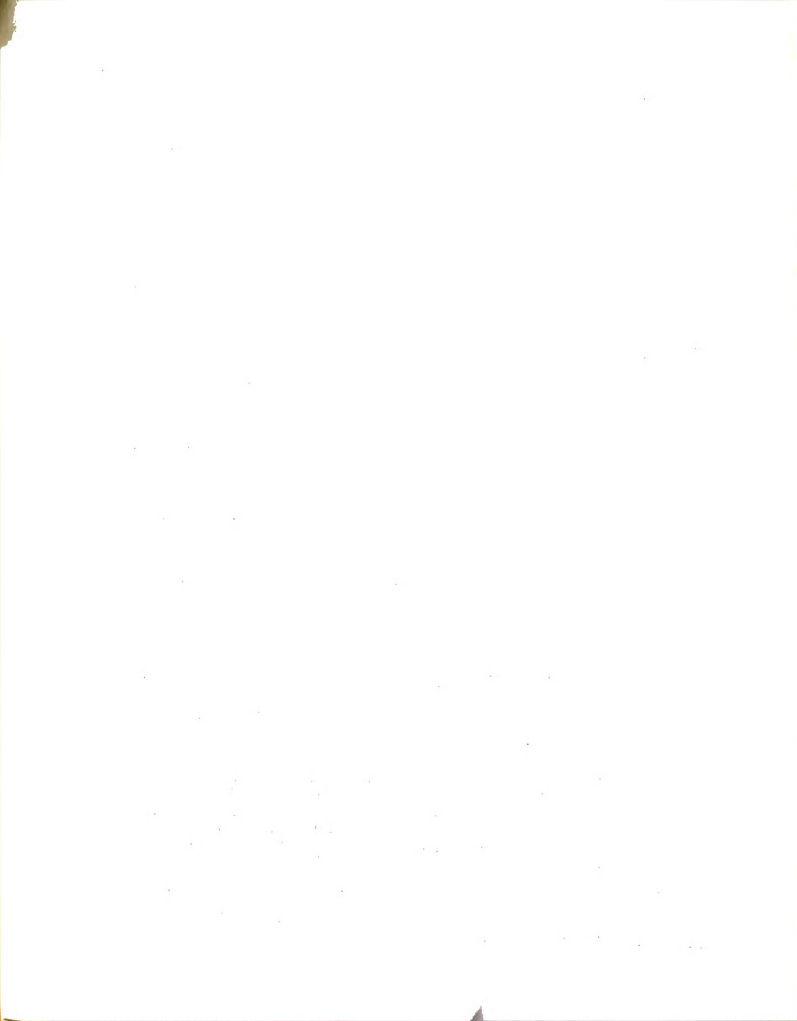
¹"I Picked My Goal at Ten--Reached It at Sixty," American (October, 1922), p. 163.



This blurb well suggests the plot-line of The Broken Lance, which is 546 pages of single-tax propaganda, the "Economics of Jesus," and a plot about a knightly preacher who renounces the House of Have in favor of the House of Want and who dies trying to settle a strike peacefully. Its hero is romantic; his name is Emerson Courtright.

Before an analysis of the book's romanticism and its other features is given, a more detailed summary of the plot should prove helpful. Emerson Courtright begins his career as a schoolteacher out West and then as a preacher, at Latimore. His former pupil, Morgan Yeager, becomes a social reformer and stimulates Emerson to practice what he preaches. Emerson's other unforgettable pupil, Olive Dearwester, goes forth to become a famous and wealthy theatrical singer and, finally, Emerson's second wife. Emerson's first wife, Amy Bloodgood, is of the plutocracy in Chicago and divorces Emerson because of his radical "Economics of Jesus" doctrine and practice thereof, and refuses to let him visit their little daughter, Mildred. At the end of the book, Emerson is killed while trying to stop a strike in Chicago, by John Bloodgood, who is Amy's brother and the rejected lover of Olive Dearwester, and who heads the militia to put down the strike that Emerson had actually solved peacefully.

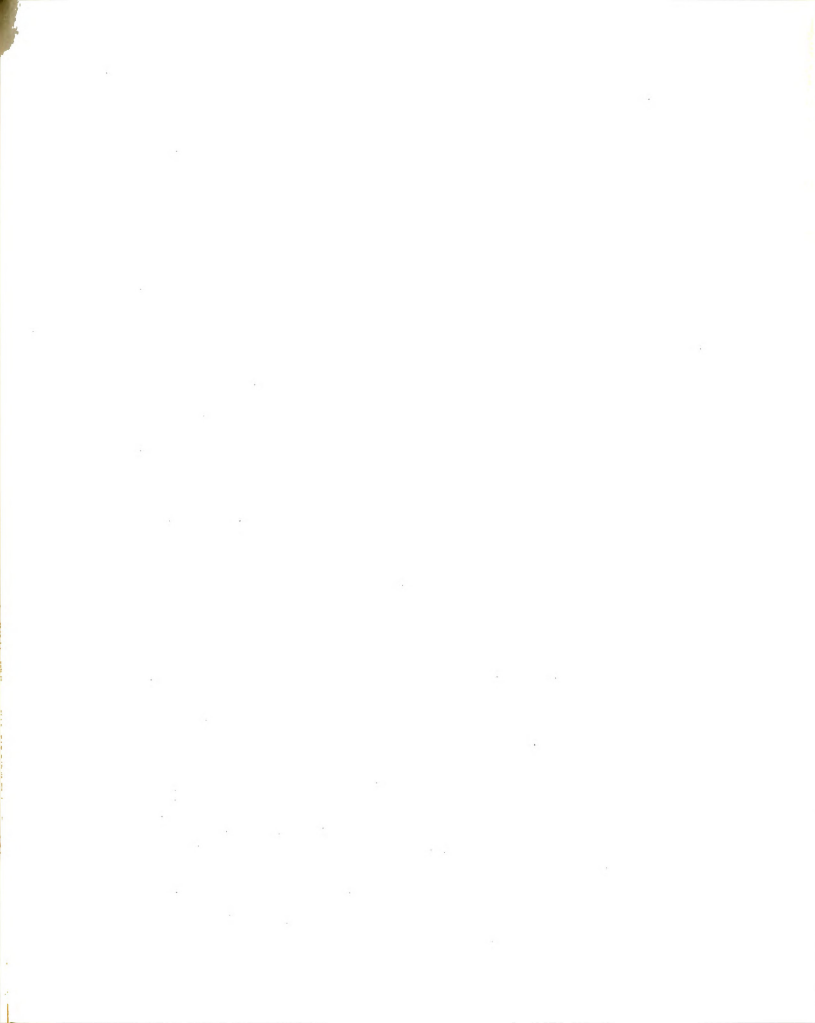
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In addition to the preponderance of romantic-sounding names for the main characters (Courtright,



Dearwester, Bloodgood)² over the less romantic (Yeager), certain chapter titles smack of the romantic: "The Fleshing of a Maiden Sword" (XII), "The Fledgling Takes Wing" (XV), "Behind the Hollow Mask" (XVI), "A Quest in the Catacombs" (XXVI), "The Strangle-Hold" (XXVII), "The Man in Crimson" (XXVIII), as well as the book's title.

Yet The Broken Lance is different from Quick's previous romances, Aladdin & Co. and Double Trouble. The Broken Lance has, instead of a gayety of tone, a grave, searching social purpose. In the Lance Quick intended to make a really serious statement about contemporary social problems. Compared to his previous books, the Lance has certain features which contribute to this difference. For example, whereas in Double Trouble Quick made references to such invented sources as The Affliction of Red-Neck Johnson and Paradise Rehypothesized, in The Broken Lance he cites only the titles of existing works or names actual authors.

In fact, The Broken Lance contains so many such references that they must be counted as one of the book's principal features. There is reference to Herbert Spencer's

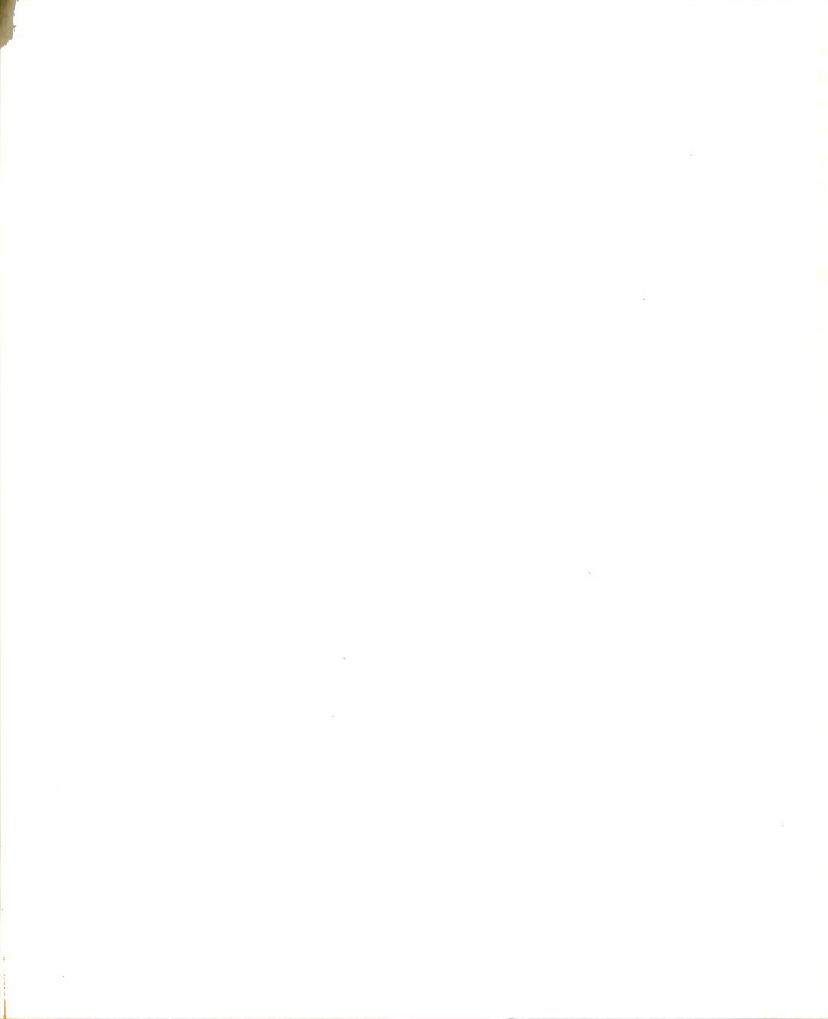
²These names have an obvious symbolic function in the story. Emerson Courtright, in addition to standing for Ralph Waldo Emerson's philosophy, is one who courts females in a right manner, which is to say in a Victorian manner, with strict observance of the "proprieties" which Quick treated in some detail in Vandemark's Folly; Courtright is also one who would, through peaceful means, make the established powers of the church and plutocracy--the "court"--do right. Dearwester is one of the dear West, more specifically one from Quick's treasured American Midwest. Bloodgood stands for the military, violence, bloodshed.

Education (p. 2); the Educational Review, a Life of Garrison, Wendell Phillips's Writings and Addresses, Mill's Logic, Lowell's Poems, Whittier and Whitman (all on p. 14); McGuffey's Second Reader (p. 15); Carlyle's Sartor Resartus (pp. 45, 191); Alice Through the Looking Glass (p. 48); Longfellow's "My Lost Youth" (p. 102); Tennyson's "Lady of Shallot" (p. 103); Shelley's Masque of Anarchy (p. 110); Jefferson and Emerson (p. 112); Adam Smith and Malthus (p. 118); Shakespeare and Aeschylus (p. 480); Saint Francis of Assisi, John Ball, Wyclif, Savonarola, Henry George, and Jesus Christ (p. 141)--there are nearly a hundred such references.

In addition to showing that he is seriously discussing a contemporary problem, these references suggest Quick's need to establish his companionship or even identity with well-known persons. He also uses the references to illustrate or explain various points as the story develops--as though he were a schoolteacher (which Quick once was) reminding his pupils of past lessons learned. Sometimes, however, the references in The Broken Lance serve no discoverable purpose, as far as the overall plot is concerned. But this cannot be said of the two most important references: Henry George and Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Quick had studied Emerson and even done a paper on him.³ He believed that Emerson's philosophical romanticism

³This paper has not been found, but Edwin Markham refers to it in his letter to Quick of October 22, 1900; in the Quick Papers.



was right but that this transcendentalism was too abstract for the practical, economic world of the early twentieth century.⁴ Quick needed a translation of general principles into concrete facts of living, and it was Henry George who came to the rescue. George brought Emerson down to earth for Quick, explaining that it "is not necessary to confiscate land; it is only necessary to confiscate rent" and proposing that:

. . . the simple yet sovereign remedy, which will raise wages, increase the earnings of capital, extirpate pauperism, abolish poverty, give remunerative employment to whoever wishes it, afford free scope to human powers, lessen crime, elevate morals, and taste, and intelligence, purify government and carry civilization to yet nobler heights, is--to appropriate rent by taxation. . . .
To abolish all taxation save that upon land values.⁵

Quick's interest in both Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry George explains much of the plot development in The Broken Lance, the first half of which is devoted to transforming its hero, Emerson Courtright, from a lofty idealist to a practical Georgeite.

In Chapter IV, "The First Fine Careless Rapture," the narrator emphasizes Emerson Courtright's Emersonian features by describing him as one who dwells beyond the realm of sensory experience:

Above all, he was what the congregations are wont to call a 'spiritual preacher'--that is, he regarded

⁴One Man's Life, p. 399.

⁵Henry George, Progress and Poverty (1879), Book VIII, Chapter II.

that exaltation of the inner consciousness which marks the intense manifestations of all religions--in Christian experience being called the indwelling of the Holy Spirit--as the supreme blessing; and he strove mightily to bring to all his people the psychic knowledge of the Spirit witnessing with their spirits that they were children of God . . . (p. 36).

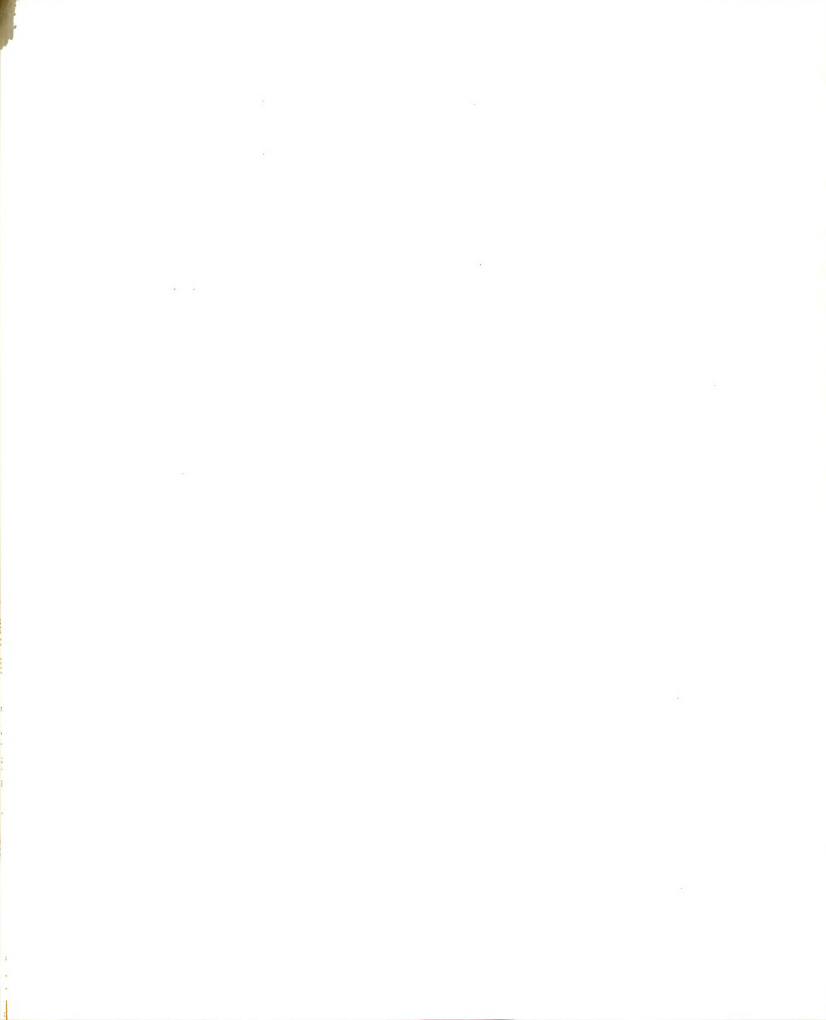
In Chapter VII, "Between Ormuzd and Ahriman," Courtright is depicted in a state of day-dreaming, his next day's sermon "half done" on his desk and a copy of Progress and Poverty in his hand. Into this scene steps his newly acquired wife, Amy Bloodgood of the plutocracy, "rosy from sleep, her flowing robe gathered by dainty ribbons about the snowy throat and virginal form":

A painter might use the scene for an allegorical canvas: The book, the Call to the Apostolate of Humanity; the woman, the Noose cast by Self in the Guise of Love; the pale Student, the Devotee Choosing. Lest the moral should be lost or reversed, the picture should, of course, carefully conceal the fact that she in the doorway was the bride of a month or so, and that he, gazing at vacancy, was most blameworthy thus to desert the One specially committed to him--because of his yearning toward All (p. 35).

The difficulty of transforming Courtright is especially noticeable in this passage, since the purpose of the allusion to R. W. Emerson's philosophy of the Many and the One is no clearer than the "moral" that should somehow not be "lost or reversed." About all that can be said is that the narrator gives evidence of his difficulty in trying to transform his spiritualistic hero.

In Chapter XII, "The Fleshing of a Maiden Sword," Courtright preaches:

The effort of the church to save society through the individual has failed. It must always fail. Let us



now address ourselves to the task of saving the individual through society (p. 148).

Here the narrator allows Courtright to preach a doctrine exactly backwards to R. W. Emerson's self-reliance. The point seems to be that as Courtright is transformed into a practical man he must adjust his Emersonian doctrines (assuming he understood them in the first place) to meet the demands of the early twentieth century.

In any case, by Chapter XVIII, "Chief Men and Honorable Women," Courtright has become more practical and quite specific in his pro-collectivism and on how the heavenly city will be achieved for each and all on earth:

'Well,' said Emerson, looking straight forward, 'I thought I would handle it like this: I'll first assume that all the highways have been taken over by the people--the government--whether wires, or rails, or pipes, and that justice in the use of the earth shall have come by freeing from tax everything produced by man, and taking all ground-rent in a tax--would you call it by its controversy-name, single tax?' (p. 214).

Thus Courtright becomes a relatively practical man, a Georgeite, but he always retains a dreamy quality and his manners, even when he is working in the Chicago slaughter house or demonstrating in the streets, faintly suggest William Graham Sumner's image of the little boy who sat down with slate and pencil and tried to remake society.

When Emerson Courtright is working in the Chicago slaughter house, the narrator, like little Edgar of In the Fairyland of America (but unlike social Darwinists of the day), reveals that he cannot accept the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. The narrator reveals this through



his sentimental attitude, as in the following paragraph from Chapter XXVIII, "The Man in Crimson":

The floor was dark with clotted and diluted blood, and blood spread in a coagulating mass of viscous red mottled with splotches of pink foam about the feet of the man who stood in front of the line of victims, which filed before him in inverted helplessness. As each one passed him, he seized it by the forefeet, spread the legs apart so as to expose the broad black throat, and then, with a single thrust, as skilful as the finest pass of a swordsman, his long keen knife went straight to the artery, and the spurt of crimson as it was withdrawn went unheeded over the man's clothes from waist to feet, as he mechanically pushed the slain brute by, and automatically reached for another--and all the time the great wheel rotated, and out from below and behind came the volume of tortured screams, each moment bringing more and more throats before him for the knife. Hour after hour, day after day he stood there, the reek of gore in his nostrils, the screech of death in his ears--the king of slaughter, surrounded by his sanguinary helpers, who, with machine and cleaver and knife, urged on by shouted command and competing enginery, tore heads from bodies, ripped out bowels, dismembered frames, and sent off to some room where they hung cooling in long rows, the clean-scraped and eviscerated creatures brought here in thousands from green fields and pastures. But the central figure, the monarch of horrors to Olive's eyes, was a man with the knife, who, with the machine-like thrust, second by second smote from its rock of flesh the fountain of blood, and stood like an embodied emblem of carnage, in steam and reek and expiring clamor, a red angel of death, dripping gore from every finger, and bathed from head to foot in the tide of butchery (pp. 363-364).

The "monarch of horrors" is the "man in crimson," the hero Emerson. The animals slaughtered, the hogs, are "victims" who emit "tortured screams," are "poor beasts" who are killed with "diabolical deliberation," and whose deaths are "pitiless tragedies." The narrator creates the impression, otherwise not bad,⁶ that the hogs ought to have been left

⁶The narrator is at least successful in suggesting the sense of speed and chaos of working on such a production



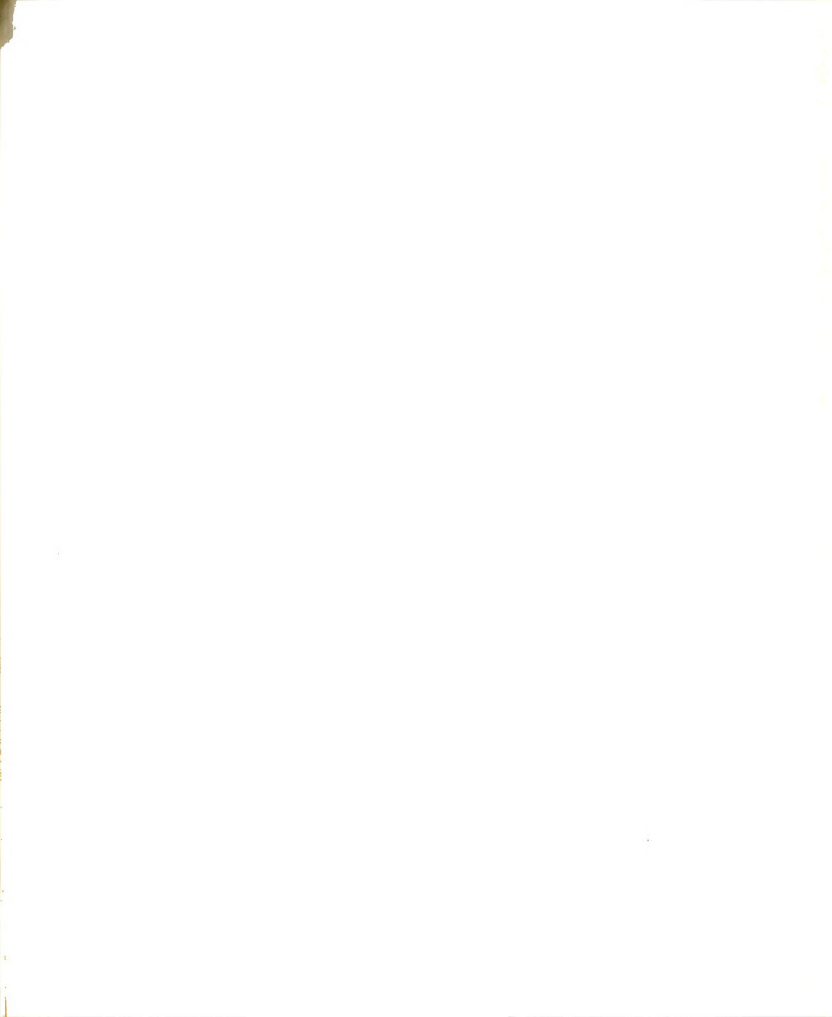
in peace in their "green fields and pastures."

In fact, although Quick correctly recognized the "embruting influence" (p. 387) of slaughter on the man who does it day in and day out, the total impression of his slaughter-house scenes is a contrast to Upton Sinclair's. The Jungle (1906) recognizes the survival-of-the-fittest code and is mainly concerned that man, and not other animals, be master. Sinclair wanted to reform or do away with the "speed-up" system in the shops and to make sure that the meat was germ free (giving man a victory over the germs before they even had a chance in the struggle for survival). Quick--a corresponding acquaintance of Sinclair's--was expressly against the presentation of such frank views in fiction.⁷ Yet Quick did not restrain himself from answering, in an editorial letter of Farm and Fireside (January 20, 1912), the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals by saying that the S. P. C. A. was "simply silly" in its criticism of "hanging up of turkeys by the feet for picking." So Quick may have agreed with Sinclair concerning the idea of the survival of the fittest, but he could not write fiction which endorsed or promoted such a doctrine.

This is a significant point because it helps to explain why Quick's fiction was often unsuccessful, at least

line. Note that in the second sentence it sounds as though one would need three arms to perform the task, and that the performer is chaotically imagined as one who is bathed in blood "from waist to feet" and "from head to foot."

⁷Letter of Herbert Quick to Upton Sinclair, May 8, 1911, in the Quick Papers.



during the period of his career before World War I. On the one hand, he ardently believed in writing a moral fiction, which in his view did not include the encouragement of any sort of brutishness. On the other, he surely could not but recognize, in life, the code of the survival of the fittest, a code which he associated with brutishness, or human indignity, and also with practicality. Once this dilemma is understood, Quick's problem in writing good fiction should also be understood. He tried to solve this problem, again, in The Broken Lance, a story about the transformation of the boyish hero into a practical man--the rub being that practicality carries with it, inherently and woefully, the burden of brutishness, the loss of idealism, dignity, romanticism, innocence.

As Quick's hero in The Broken Lance undergoes the transition from an innocent and lofty idealist to a practical Georgeite and manual laborer, the experience is not a happy one for Emerson. This feature of the book is made clear by the two contrasting scenes in which Quick the narrator places his hero Emerson. One scene is a romantically rustic village in Wisconsin, where Emerson is very happy. The other is Chicago, which is "emblematic of the inferno into which he [Emerson] had replunged" (p. 446). Emerson goes back and forth between these two places. He feels that it is his practical duty to plunge, and replunge, into Chicago, and all that it stands for, but he is definitely not happy there because of its contrast to the pleasant romantic realm:

Chicago! It was a name of dread and command and call to Emerson, breaking with fierce dissonance upon the glamorous air of the realm of Arthur, Guinevere, Count Gismond, Childe Roland, Lorna Doone, Annabel Lee, Sir Launfal, The Lady of Shalott, The Italian in England--and the Queen of Atlantis . . . (p. 422).

In order to define a happy romanticism, Quick here overdoes the references to the point of satire.

In this connection, the literary style of one long scene in Wisconsin is particularly noteworthy. This scene occurs toward the end of the book, in Chapter XXXIII, where the narrator pauses to insert a short story (a story within a story) and at the same time to comment, as it were, upon his problem of language, diction, style. The situation is this: Morgan Yeager, Olive Dearwester, and Emerson Court-right (now sometimes called Strangler Courtright because of his slaughter-house work in Chicago) are away from non-romantic Chicago, preparing to return there the next day. But since not much packing had to be done, Olive and Emerson decide to take a stroll through the nearby woods. While they are gone, Morgan wonders "what was going on out there among the trees and meadows" (p. 432). Quick tells what was going on by referring to "the beautiful story of Emma and Eginhard--which goes back, it will be remembered, to the time of Charlemagne," saying that there is, however, a better way to tell that story, and then he inserts the following:

Now Queen Olivia, being young and full of the sap of youth, and moreover, being of such wondrous beauty that no man of all her court dared look forthrightly into her countenance, lest he run straightway mad of



love, was without a consort, for that none of her nobles and princes was pleasing in her sight. Yet she, being young, as aforesaid, yearned strongly after the king that was to be, and dreamed many dreams of him, as being of mighty strength and of most fair favor, and so pure in heart that to none other woman would he ever give even so much as a glance of the eyes or a thought. So, being of such warm heart toward Love, she was natless cold to all lovers until there came to the court, borne prone and white upon branches of cedar spread on two lances, a knight cravenly smitten from behind upon the crown by caitiffs in a gruesome battle in the wilderness, and bleeding much and nigh unto death . . . (p. 432).

The story goes on in this manner to tell that Queen Olivia nursed the knight back to health, that the knight however was more concerned about battles and wanted to continue his quest, "mayhap, of San Graal," and that the knight perhaps surrendered to the Queen's charms after all, "in the democracy of the wood." Then Quick narrates, "let us go on with the adventures of this modern prince and princess [Emerson and Olive] in speech more suited to modern ears" (pp. 433-434).

That is, more suited than the simulated style of a romantic medievalist. But what is this "modern speech"? It is different, but only slightly so. Both modes are coy, even feminine, in relating mating matters. The "modern" style has more of a titillating sort of Victorian sexiness in it. Quick's very next paragraph is as follows, illustrative of his "modern speech":

She tripped along before Emerson through the path, stooping so that her straw hat might escape the boughs, and gathering her skirts about the ankles clad in openwork of silk. Emerson followed, telling his beads. That is, he was arranging his words for the statement he meant to make with reference to his return to



Chicago. At the margin of the meadow, she turned on him, her cheeks rosy with the swift walk under the trees, her bosom heaving with her deep breathing--heaving in rounded billows glimpsing creamily through a lace yoke, topped with its half-seen line of pink ribbon. The knight forgot the count of his beads, and began all over again (p. 434).

Olive and her "knight" Emerson then have a rather long conversation about King Arthur and Queen Guinevere and also Lancelot (pp. 436-437), and the wood scene draws to a close with Emerson carrying Olive across a stream (a situation which Quick used again in Vandemark's Folly), narrated in this fashion:

He took her up, oh, so tenderly and deliberately, and walked straight across to the opposite side. She said nothing either as to his slowness or speed; and this time, perhaps, it was her clasp that tightened ever so slightly, as they neared to the end of their crossing. And then, when he had put her on her feet, he stooped and kissed her on the mouth in a strange way that seemed to her like a kiss from a devotee to an image. She stood quite still, and then--she put up her lips for another kiss; which he bestowed as the Greek boy might have given the second to Artemis, in the delicious fear arising from the first (p. 440).

The title of this chapter, "The Magnet and the Armature," in which Quick found it so difficult if not impossible to surrender his romantic style in depicting his hero, is significant. The magnet was in Quick's day a synonym for city. It was common for the newspapers then, particularly in articles about the back-to-the-land movement, to refer to the city as a magnet. The magnet as an image reflected the pervasive deterministic and mechanistic thinking, and it was used by Theodore Dreiser, who entitled a chapter in Sister Carrie (1900) "The Magnet Attracting" in reference to



Chicago. A brief comparison of Dreiser and Quick suggests one reason why the relatively unknown writer is important. The significant difference between the well-known writer's use of the magnet image and Quick's use of it is that Dreiser makes no explicit judgment about it; Dreiser merely puts his heroine in the city and describes how she survives by accommodating herself to the deterministic forces. But Dreiser's effectiveness--shocking in its own day--derives from his public's assumption that the city-magnet was evil. Quick was one who contributed to that standard assumption by explicitly depicting the city-magnet as evil. It has already been noted that General Lattimore, in Quick's Aladdin & Co. spoke at length about the city-magnet in highly unfavorable terms, and in The Broken Lance the city draws Emerson to his fateful destruction. Another significant difference is that the boy-like Emerson plunges and replunges into Chicago not, as is the case of Dreiser's Carrie, to seek glitter and fame and comfortable satisfactions, but to reform the corruption he found there.

Emerson Courtright remains throughout Quick's story a romantic and idealistic boy. The narrator's attempted transformation of him into a practical hero who somehow must grapple with the city on its own realistic terms is awkward. This important aspect of The Broken Lance might be made clear if it is compared to another work which was published in the same year, Jack London's The Iron Heel (1907). London's hero, Ernest Everhard, is, like Quick's Emerson



Courtright, a socialistic reformer. But Everhard is not a socialist in the same sense as Courtright is; even their respective names suggest this. Everhard appears in a different and a consistent literary style. Everhard is a matter-of-fact, outspoken, hardened fighter who relishes the logical demolition of opponents by his fact-filled debate and who (apparently) has no more compunctions about tossing a bomb into a nest of plutocrats than having a sexual affair without the benefit of traditional courting and marriage. Courtright, on the other hand, is appalled by the use of physical force (as in the strike scene at the end of the story) to accomplish reform; and Courtright maintains a traditional, proper, Victorian stance with respect to his associations with Amy Bloodgood and Olive Dearwester. In a word, Everhard is a realistic socialist and Courtright, a romantic socialist.⁸

Apart from such comparisons, The Broken Lance has a serious, searching social purpose. Its intended theme is a protest against private ownership and capitalism, and against the hypocrisy of American churches. It suggests the remedy of socialism, or communism. Often the book takes on

⁸This paragraph and the preceding one are not intended to imply that Quick was familiar with the work of either Dreiser or London; the only discoverable link between Quick and London is that they both knew the work of Upton Sinclair; Quick may have read the advertisement about Sister Carrie which appeared at the end of the Grosset and Dunlap edition of Aladdin & Co. But there is no question of influence here: the significance of Quick is that he offers a standard by which the better-known writers may be read.



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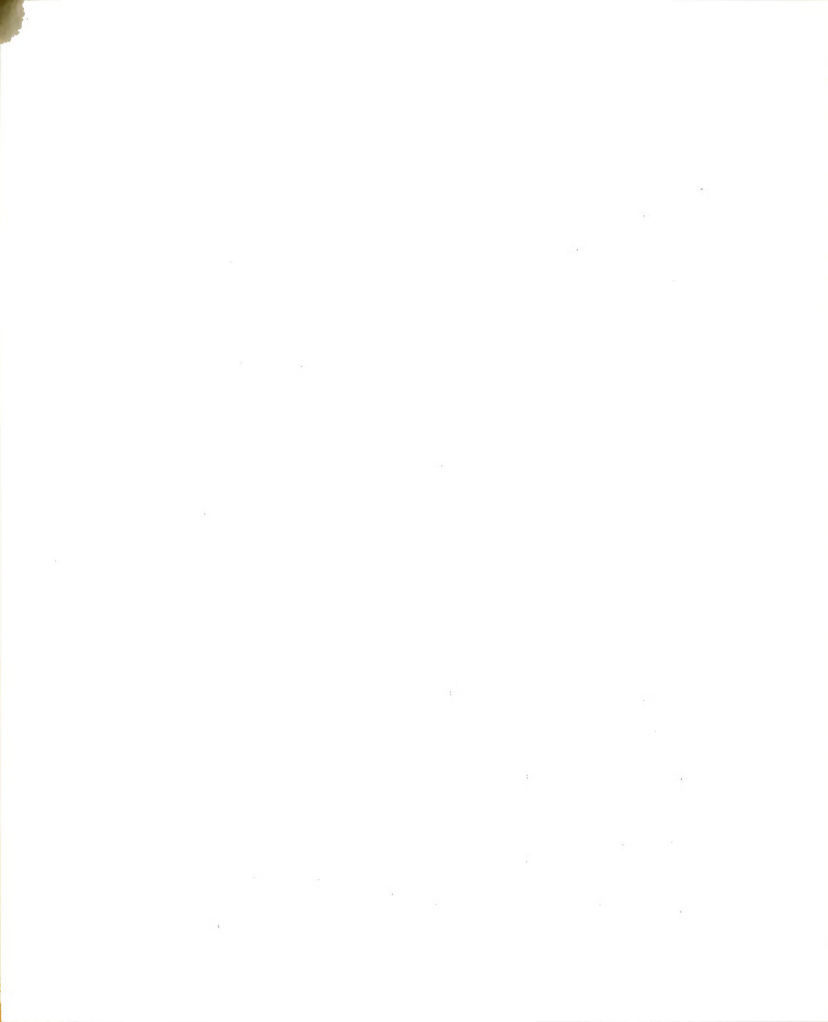
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the quality of the tract: the sermons are explicit. Morgan Yeager, for example, delivers a summary sermon in Chapter XLI, "The Last Word," which characterizes the many preceding it. A brief excerpt of Morgan's preaching follows:

'So it was that he [Emerson] became my leader and teacher, as he has been the leader and teacher of so many others; and as I had once been his. He took the hard learning which I had given him, and harmonized it with the truths of all true religion; and he preached it from a great American pulpit. He told his people of the communism of Jesus; but he also told them that only things necessary to be made common were so treated. He showed that if we in this age were only to keep out of the hands of the individual those things which are of common creation, and therefore of common right, we should thereby bring an era in which the things which feed and shelter and clothe mankind would be so plentiful and cheap--as matches and newspapers now are--that no one would care to assert private ownership in them, as against another person's desire--and that we should thus have arrived at practical communism by common consent, through universal plenty, by rendering unto all the things that belong to all, and sacredly unto each the things which are his alone' (p. 544).

As if the explicit sermons of Yeager or of Court-right were not enough, Quick employs throughout the story certain references to enhance his purpose of protest and "propaganda" in 1907. For example, the

. . . 'Blackhall Stamps,' a queer appliance for propaganda work [were] devised by an ardent soul named Blackhall, who applied the methods of the exploiters of root pills and live-stock fairs to force land reform upon the notice of the wayfaring man. The 'Blackhall Stamp' had an adhesive back, and a face on which some Georgeite text was printed. Some simply mentioned the fact that 'The Single Tax Will do It,' or asked the seemingly unsociological question, 'Have You Seen the Cat?' Others bore bits of argument like: 'Tax dogs to make dogs scarce. Why tax houses or factories or stocks of goods or money? To make them scarce? It does.' The Emersonism, 'While another hath no land, my title to mine, your title to yours, is vitiated;' the Jeffersonism, 'The earth belongs in usufruct to the living: the dead



have no right or power over it,' were much used; as were also Red Jacket's exclamation: 'Sell land! Why not then sell the sky, the waters and the air? The land is for all men!' and the Mosaic text: 'The land shall not be sold for ever, saith the Lord; for the land is mine' (p. 112).

Another example of propagandizing righteousness is the Voorhuit, a group of socialists in Ghent who were "learning the lesson of the bees and ants and prairie-dogs--how to live together on terms of righteousness" (p. 481).

Quick's additional comment on the Voorhuit is that they had more solidarity, even owned their own theaters, had more true "co-living" than the George movement in the United States; the George movement, according to Quick, lacked the passion of the Voorhuit, should be more cooperative, and was too often and unfortunately a mere "intellectual cult" (p. 481). This is probably why Quick depicts his hero Emerson Courtright as a romantic who must somehow be made practical, a man of action:

'Thought is free,' said she [Olive], '--and amounts to mighty little. It is action that counts.'
'Ah, yes!' he [Emerson] cried. 'It is action that counts. Action!' (p. 437).

Emerson's actions on behalf of an American socialistic movement gain the admiration of the working people, such as the O'Malleys and Burnses, but his actions do not accomplish practical reform. His active battle against the plutocracy ends not with a socialistic victory but with his own death.

Concerning the book's title, Emerson explains to Amy Bloodgood that education ought to be freely supported by the State, that the greatest philanthropists are nevertheless

still "robber-barons" and the most hypocritical church members (who have a double standard--cold business through the week, warm brotherhood on Sunday), that the church itself has fallen in modern times, and then he quotes for her a verse:

'Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it' (p. 156).

In other words, Emerson thinks of himself as the "strong lance of justice" who, if the plutocracy's gold is not taken away, will be broken. Later, Emerson explains the same idea to Morgan Yeager: "'If evil be entrenched behind a stone wall, you must become a projectile, to be dashed to pieces against it. You cannot serve both God and Mammon'" (pp. 427-428). Emerson as knightly lance or "projectile" hurling himself against the wall of Mammon, or the plutocracy, is aware that he might not be a complete practical success, for he adds, " . . . 'if I have not battered a breach in the wall, I have at least laid no stones in it'" (p. 428).

Indeed, Emerson has a martyr complex. "'You can not live as Jesus did?'" he asks of Morgan, "'Well, then, die as He died'" (p. 428). And a bit later Emerson explains himself:

'We are under a money despotism, as insolent and ruthless as the despotism of the czar. I chose to light a bomb and die in its explosion that I might call men to resistance by the sight of what I did' (p. 462).

Emerson's willing surrender of his comfortable position as preacher in plutocracy-controlled churches and his forfeiture



of his own life--his martyrdom--raise the question of the genre of The Broken Lance. Morgan Yeager suggests, "'To find Emerson fallen from his high estate would be a greater tragedy than never to find him at all . . . '" (p. 386); and Olive speaks of "'a book that will horrify and shame the world'" (p. 327).

In view of these clues, is it possible that Herbert Quick had in mind Aristotelian tragedy when he wrote The Broken Lance? Yes; but it must be confessed that the book's intended stimulation of pity and fear (or shame and horror, which are similar enough emotions) simply does not result in catharsis for the reader. The book has too many distractions for a serious purpose of magnitude, too much explicit moralizing and propaganda, too much awkward mixing of literary styles, too much melodrama, too much romantic sentimentality. It is possible, of course, that Quick intended a passionately romantic sentimentality as Emerson's tragic flaw; but this creates another awkward situation, for why would Quick consider a flaw the very quality which he believed the George movement lacked? Moreover, although it is possible for a romantic hero to be a tragic one also (witness Shakespeare's Othello), Quick's romantic Emerson is actually more melodramatic than tragic.

One of the numerous recent critics to discuss the nature of tragedy, Robert B. Heilman, makes the following theoretical distinction between tragedy and melodrama:

In melodrama, he [man] is victorious or he is defeated; in tragedy, he experiences defeat in victory,

or victory in defeat. In melodrama, man is simply guilty or simply innocent; in tragedy, his guilt and his innocence coexist. . . .

Melodrama has affinities with politics; tragedy, with religion. Pragmatic politics appears as a competition for power between good and evil; our side is 'good,' and the other side, 'evil.' In the religious view of man is a sense of his dividedness, of the co-presence of counterimpulses always striving for dominance, of the fact that throughout his life he is a dual creature with equal possibilities of coming to salvation or damnation. Melodrama leans toward the timely, tragedy toward the timeless; on the one hand we have the world of protest and problem plays; on the other, the world of meditation and myth.⁹

In Heilman's terms, it can be seen that Quick's Emerson Courtright is melodramatically "simply innocent." He has no struggling good and evil within him (as in the case, say, of Shakespeare's Macbeth). The conflict is external: Emerson is the pure hero against the villainous plutocracy. The fact that at the end of The Broken Lance it is this villainous plutocracy which destroys Emerson (though it does not conquer his spirit) underscores the book's pragmatic purpose of shocking social protest and, hopefully, reform in the real society of 1907. The Broken Lance "leans toward the timely," in Heilman's phrase.

This is to say, too, that it leans less toward the world of myth. But the myth is there, underneath the melodrama and propaganda, and, in the context of Quick's development as a writer, it is the most important element in the entire book. Emerson's story is of the Myth of the Fall,

⁹"Tragedy and Melodrama," The Texas Quarterly (Summer, 1960) in Tragedy: Vision and Form, ed. Robert W. Corrigan (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Co., 1965), p. 257.

not of the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall, but just the Fall. Emerson's is a shocking, regrettable, unfortunate fall. The Fall is from Innocence.

Again, Emerson's romantic innocence--his boylike, Adamic purity--is destroyed not by any fault within his own character but by external forces, by the villains of an experienced, realistic, pragmatic and corrupt society. The magnet of this urbanized and plutocracy-controlled society draws him--because of his dutiful wish to reform contemporary society--and he plunges and replunges into the "inferno" of Chicago, confronted by the realities of the slaughter house and performing the butcherous chores which naturally repel him, until his benevolent attempt to stop an armed clash of human beings ends with his death. Quick seems to bemoan the very necessity of pragmatic political action, and his mythic message, in his only long-story where the hero dies, is that innocence, unfortunately, cannot survive in an environment of experience.

Although The Broken Lance offers the specific solution of George's single tax, its broader question is not completely answered: where is innocence? To survive the conditions of the modern American city, innocence must somehow adapt, or be transformed; but to be transformed is to lose innocence: this was a dilemma for Herbert Quick.

In choosing a romantic socialist for his hero Quick was on the side of the rising social thought (collectivism instead of individualism), but he expressed an ambivalent



attitude both toward his romantic style (which derived from his readings and was perhaps appropriate to depict a romantic hero) and toward the rising realistic literary method (which put a premium on fidelity to experience).

It is thus possible that Quick meant it when he called The Broken Lance his "most searching" novel; it is noteworthy in passing that one chapter therein is actually entitled "A Quest in the Catacombs" (XXVI) and describes Olive and Morgan's "search" for the lost innocent, Emerson. Quick's search was not only in idea (innocence vs. experience, socialism vs. plutocracy) but also in literary form (a romantic style vs. a realistic one, melodrama and tragedy). A viable work of fiction may well have such various elements, may well stimulate multipartite critical interpretations, but in The Broken Lance these features are not blended into an artistic whole.

Perhaps because The Broken Lance was not a popular success in its own day, Quick tried to convey the same social message--or, rather, half of it (i.e., that capitalistic speculators, plutocrats, or monopolists are villains)--in a fictional method that was more in vogue at the time; for the method of his next work of fiction, Virginia of the Air Lanes (1909), is neither serious nor searching. Its method is, rather, quite dominantly and humorously melodramatic, or satirically romantic.

A looking-backward story, Virginia of the Air Lanes has a futuristic setting--"America, well along toward the

middle of the twentieth century" (p. 80). Virginia deals with what might happen in America when air planes, flimsy enough contraptions or toys in 1909, are developed into a major means of transportation in the future. Quick makes his prognostications in a plot which may be summarized as follows.

Theodore Carson, the hero, is the inventor of a marvelous aircraft which others in the story want to capitalize on. Carson refuses to side with Finley Shayne ("the Prince of the Powers of the Air," i.e., the capitalistic exploiters) and his villainous companion, Silberberg. Craighead, a humorous opportunist whom Carson meets by accident, convinces Carson that they, together, should fight the Shayne forces. The battle between these two monopolistically minded powers takes place on land, sea, and air, and in the courtroom. The "good" monopolists (the Carson-Craighead Aéronef Company) win. Meanwhile, a love story develops: Virginia Suarez (Shayne's niece) flies, literally, from the villainous (i.e., sexually seductive) advances of Silberberg into the chivalrous arms of Theodore Carson, whom she mistakenly identifies as another uncle for a while. Carson names his new aéronef the Virginia in her honor, and after she learns that he is not her uncle she encourages his love even more and in the last chapter they are married with the prospect of living happily ever after.

The melodramatic alignment of heroes and villains is established in the opening scenes. First there is the scene



where Virginia is in the helicopter attached to the Roc (her uncle Shayne's airship), fiddling with the controls, and the villainous Silberberg makes his unwanted advance:

'I could move this lever a little,' said she,
'and fly away. I feel as if I should fly!'
'I shall not let you,' said he. 'I shall hold
you!'
'Mr. Silberberg!'

The rebuke was evoked by his putting his arm about her. One white, jeweled hand was slipped behind her, the other laid on her arm, the oily perfumed curls stooping until the red lips approached hers. . . . Virginia pushed the lever . . . and the wings started. The pull of the vivified mechanism, drawing him out to death, made Silberberg's very fingers tingle with terror, and he let go girl and car, and leaped backward (p. 15).

Virginia then flies the helicopter, awkwardly and luckily, until she thinks she is utterly "lost" (p. 19). But just then Theodore comes to the rescue by grabbing the rope dangling from the helicopter and wrestling the odd contraption nearly to the ground, onto which soft sandy beach Virginia falls--"a mass of red hat, crimson scarf, piqué and silken fallals" (p. 19). Theodore then takes the unconscious Virginia to his "mysterious shed in the dunes" and properly treats the bumps and bruises she had suffered during her perilous escape. A damsel in distress, rescued, Virginia thanks Theodore--"flightily," for she has been in flight--with words suggesting that Quick did not wish his popular audience to mistake the fact that he was writing a melodramatic romance: "'I came out to thank you, sir,' said Virginia flightily, 'for your heroic behavior--heroic, romantic, mediaeval behavior! Don't my eyes look funny?'" (p. 25). Although Theodore fails to see the humor in this

(and it is perhaps a question whether Quick's audience did), his behavior is a direct contrast to Silberberg's, for Theodore replies to Virginia, "with infinite solicitude": "I beg of you not to mention it, madam. . . . But may I not insist upon your allowing me to escort you back to your room?" (p. 25). Henceforth Virginia is on the side of the courteous Theodore, the hero, and against Silberberg and the other villains.

Throughout the story Theodore is characterized as a melodramatic, naive, inexperienced youth. The narrator repeatedly refers to him as "the boy" (p. 139), the "boy-uncle" to Virginia (p. 174), or as one "so young and inexperienced" (p. 179). Theodore is like Adam, boyishly puzzled by the arrival of Eve (Virginia) in his Eden, which is called Carson's Landing:

. . . this was Carson's Landing. The gourds hanging from tall poles; the martins chattering from them; the china tree full of blossoms like lilac blooms, humming with bees and visited incessantly by crimson bee-birds --all these he knew. But this, this corset; with its lacing unrove it lay there like a mold awaiting the casting of a Phidian Psyche. The name entering his mind made him tremble. He picked up the fragrant garment with the pink ribbons edging it, and looked at it with something of the terror of Charmides in the shrine of Artemis. He had forgotten the marvel of their presence in that of the things themselves; for he was paradisiacally innocent . . . (p. 159).

When Virginia enters this scene, unaware at first of Theodore's presence, he reacts like a boy who has been caught with his hand in the cookie jar:

A light step sounded without, and he froze with the corset in his hand to a statue of panic and trance and paralysis. Some one entered, his heart bounded,

and then stood still; for it was Psyche of the dunes, Shayne's niece, Virginia, entering jauntily, maddeningly, like a real woman taking possession of his bedroom as her own! She had a little subjectively derived smile on her lips, held in her hands a spray of huckleberry blooms, which she put to her nostrils, and then stuck in a vase by the old mirror. She took off the memorable red hat, and pulled up her skirt with affrighting recklessness, examined her dainty stockings for dust or burs, and dropped the skirt with a little flirt, like a wren shaking a raindrop from her tail. She did a dozen things to make one fear the fate of Tom of Coventry. Every time she looked his way, Theodore quaked . . . (pp. 159-160).

When Theodore (whose name means "gift of God," suggesting an innocent, Edenic gift) announces his presence, Virginia too is alarmed, for she too is a virgin (as her name suggests); yet " . . . she was the least excited of the twain. Her alarm ceased with her recognition of him; for this boy had shown himself one to be trusted" (p. 161). A trustworthy but clumsy boy, Theodore is clearly a direct contrast to the smooth and experienced Silberberg.

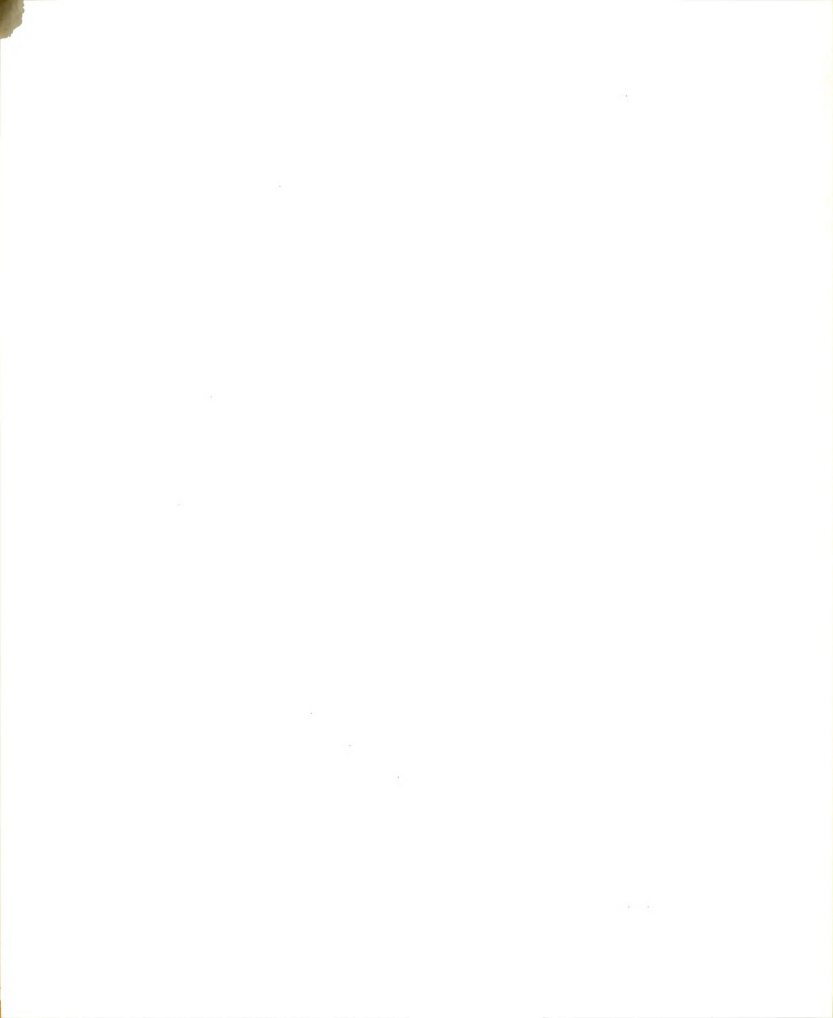
The melodramatic clumsiness of Theodore is depicted again and again in this story. For example, when he discovers that the Shayne forces have stolen his virgin flying machine, the Virginia, he rants and raves, with an unfeigned antic disposition, at Wisner, one of Shayne's "devils":

'You're all linked in together!' he [Theodore] wailed, sitting on a bench, and feebly pounding his head against the column. 'You're the head devil! . . . You stole her! Give me my million or give her back--'

Carson took him by the throat, choked him purple, and banged his head against the post until the whining became an outcry of real pain. . . .

Wisner moved away slowly, but turned at a safe distance, his eyes blazing.

'I'll fix you, you young fool!' he snarled. 'You think you're an engineer! I'll show you!'



'Go!' said Carson. 'Before I fix you so you can't --you snake!' (pp. 192-193).

The melodramatic conflict between an Adamic hero and a Satanic villain is illustrated not only in such scenes of confrontation between characters but also in scenes highlighting their respective machines.

Pitted against the heroic Virginia (which Carson recovers, of course) is the villainous submarine, the Stickleback, which has a "black slimy nose" (p. 248), lurks in the waters "like a shark awaiting the dropping overboard of man or other morsel" (p. 250), is a "go-devil" (p. 259), and is operated by Wizner, who (like the developing villain on the international scene in Quick's day, Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm II) "had a withered arm" (p. 307). The battle takes place in the chapter entitled "Devil-Fish vs. Bird" (XIII). The situation is this: Theodore and Virginia are flying in their marvelous craft in the serene heavens when they see someone in apparent distress in the bay and go to the rescue, only to find themselves deceived and their Virginia caught by a chain attached to the Stickleback: "They were chained to their fate--a dark fiend of a machine that was taking them out to sea, to deeps profound enough to drown them" (p. 264), and echoing in their ears is the "harsh, raucous laugh of Wizner" which "rose with horrid significance from the Stickleback's manhole" (p. 262). Theodore's response is to climb out and under the Virginia, file in hand, and the race against time is like the melodramatic situation of the tied-up damsel watching the train or the buzz-saw coming

nearer and nearer:

The air-ship sank, sank, nearer and nearer to the water. . . . Carson again attacked the chain, and the shrill 'scream' of the file greeted Virginia's ears again . . . but with remorseless suction-like force the submarine drew her down closer, closer to the water, and she seemed lost. . . . Virginia looked and despaired. The waves were so terrifyingly near; death in their cold depths seemed so unthinkably horrible. . . .

'I think,' said she, 'that we are doomed. Is there anything I can do?'

'You might advance the spark,' said he (p. 269).

This goes on for four pages, Virginia at the spark-levers of the aëronef and Theodore filing away, and they finally escape from their "deadly peril" (p. 270). A similar situation occurs in the next-to-the-last chapter, where Theodore rescues Virginia from the mountain fortress of "Shayne's Hold," which is almost as fantastic as something out of Ian Fleming.

The main issue of Virginia of the Air Lanes is the old one of monopoly, but instead of land monopoly per se, the legalistic issue of air-space rights. Quick's intention is to show that air should not become the private property of anyone and, by analogy, that the common gift of land should not be (in 1909) the object of monopolistic speculators either. Yet the hero, as well as the villains of this melodramatic romance, appears as a monopolist. This state of affairs can be appreciated only in the light of the relationship between Theodore Carson and his partner in crime, Craighead.

Theodore meets Craighead in Chapter IV, "The Fall that Followed Pride." The "Fall" refers to Theodore's

departure from his paradisiacal Carson's Landing on the Alabama coast, where he first met and rescued Virginia, and then his parachute fall from the high-flying Roc, after proudly refusing Shayne's offer to buy out his interests in both Virginia and the newly invented aëronef named in her honor. Theodore falls through the night-filled space, "like a soul hurled forth into a purgatory of limitless descent" (p. 76); and he finally lands in a strange, cold, walled-in "garden" which has a "Cerberus guarding it" (p. 79). A "Cerberus," in classical mythology, was supposed to be a dog guarding the entrance and exit to Hades, and it is in this hell-like garden that Theodore meets Craighead. The garden is not Edenic but hell-like because it is associated with capitalism and the city.

Craighead becomes a devilish "guide" (p. 83), a humorous one, for Theodore. When they meet, Craighead too is trying to find a way over the wall, his abortive attempt to climb it nearly resulting in "'a doom that . . . would have topped the agonies of deepest hell'" (pp. 81-82). Later, the innocent Theodore comes to feel "helpless in the toils of [Craighead's] serpentine logic" (p. 127) and to accept his "hissed" replies to naive questions (p. 128). Quick doubtless had in mind a serpent-like companion for his Adamic hero.

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allowing the Duke, one of Huck Finn's guides, to speak in a mock-Shakespearean style): "'I wot we are kindred spirits, rectified, one hundred proof, aged in the wood and bottled in bond--bottled tight! Wottest thou not so, w'at?'" (p. 82). Craighead then leads Theodore to the "fragrant and warm" greenhouse of the emporium, a "flowery jail" (p. 84) where the boy and the much older Craighead exchange information about their respective conditions.

Theodore learns that the mysterious place, the emporium, into which he has accidentally fallen is a "drink cure" establishment, privately owned and inefficiently operated, that Craighead is an alcoholic confined there against his will, and that Craighead has various useful assets, including a knowledge of the law. Craighead learns that Theodore is the inventor of a marvelous new aircraft and that this would be an excellent opportunity for monopolistic exploitation if they could only escape from the emporium. (They soon do escape and form the "great Carson-Craighead Aëronef Corporation," p. 127.)

Although Craighead refers to himself, in Theodore's presence, as one of the "parasitic capitalists" (p. 98) and as one eager to "go forth and rob folks like any other good citizen" (p. 121), Theodore accepts the new partnership: not only because in his innocence he is mystified by Craighead's "serpentine logic" but also because he would like fame and fortune to offer Virginia, his new-found girlfriend who apparently needs plenty of new and expensive clothes,

such as corsets.

The partnership of Theodore Carson and Craighead helps illustrate Quick's satiric purpose; for Carson, in being less ambitious and less experienced in the matter of monopolistic exploitation, provides a norm for Craighead's exaggerated schemes and melodramatic delusions of grandeur:

'I'm glad,' said Carson, 'to get above profits. Thank Heaven, clouds can't be commercialized.'
'Can't, eh?' sneered Craighead. 'You have made good with this machine, I'll have to admit; but you lack financial resourcefulness. I've got to dig out the by-products of the company myself. One of them has just occurred to me. We'll lease sites for captive balloons all along our lanes of licensed air navigation, and sell the right to throw ads for Johnson's Gum Drops and Mother Hubbard's Obesity Regulator on the shining levels of the cloud floor. It can be done by a simple mechanism--if it isn't invented, I'll invent it in an odd moment. And we'll sell exclusive rights to throw colored pictures of Killarney and Senator Clark's house, and moving pictures of the great Sage-Brush Hen-House Robbery on the thunder clouds in alternation with praises of Peterson's Planetary Paint and Bugworth's Insecticide. Why, hang you, witless youth, let me out, while I work these things up, right now!' (p. 319).

With his extreme pro-monopoly view, Craighead becomes Quick's principal satiric mouthpiece for the opposite view (namely, that air monopoly would really be as immoral as land monopoly is). This is shown again in the courtroom scene. There Craighead begins by telling the court that airownership is "as moral as landownership":

'Cujus ad solum, ejus est usque ad coelum,' went on Craighead, 'is the maxim on which we stand, the meaning of which has been decided in hundreds of cases--and, strange to say, is still clear--"He who owns land, owns to the sky." He has as much moral right to the sky as to the surface' (pp. 372-373).

The satiric note begins here, of course, in the "strange . . . still clear," and in the very next sentence absurdity makes the satire clear:

'The man with a deed to a square mile of the surface of this planet, under this law, owns a great pyramid, apexing at the earth's center, and extending out into space, in diverging lines, infinitely; so that if he can show that these lines of boundary take in Mars and her canals, he would have a perfect case against the Martians for rent of fields and tolls over waterways, if he could get service and bring the defendants into court' (p. 373).

The whole story becomes a 424-page joke on American monopolists, who are depicted in a negative and ridiculous and melodramatic light, but the story does make a positive point, too: newness, or virginity, per se is good. Called by Quick's most favorite name, Virginia, this is what Carson's new machine symbolized when it was newly invented. As Virginia--the good "solid American girl" (p. 225), who did not really want the riches Theodore thought she did--expressed it, Carson's invention of the machine was "doing, creating" but his subsequent use of it "was the old story of finding out how to exploit the world by monopoly" (p. 385).

In the opening sentences of the last chapter of Virginia of the Air Lanes, "Finale" (XIX), the narrator gives a final example of his attitude toward the melodramatic-romance technique which he has employed throughout the story:

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he met at the water's edge a huge Swede in overalls carrying Virginia and towing Mr. Shayne by a line . . . (p. 406).

It is as though Quick were yawning at the formulas of romance and desirous of writing in a matter-of-fact, realistic manner.

In the real mid-twentieth century of America, melodrama--with its hair-breadth escapes and rescues, mysterious places, heroes and villains--was read, or viewed, more for the laughs it provided than for its thrills. Quick's Virginia of the Air Lanes is an illustration of this changed attitude toward melodrama, a change very possibly beginning around 1909. However that may be, Quick's mixed or uneasy attitude toward melodrama distracts from the effectiveness of Virginia of the Air Lanes. A good melodramatic romance should be written straight, so to speak, like a Ian Fleming story. By 1921, even Quick, looking back upon Virginia of the Air Lanes, could refer to the banality and ineffectiveness of at least its title (he said it was "Charley Norcross's invention . . . a Hearst headline put to a book").¹⁰

In order to understand the development of Quick's fiction, it is profitable to compare, by way of brief summary, the two works analyzed in the present chapter, The Broken Lance and Virginia of the Air Lanes. The first book has a serious intent; the second, a humorous intent. The first emphasizes the cure for societal ills; the second,

¹⁰Letter of Herbert Quick to Hewitt Hanson Howland, April 26, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

the disease. In both books, the heroes are essentially the same and the villains are essentially the same. The villains are plutocrats, capitalistic speculators, monopolists, experienced, city men; the heroes are romantic, innocent, Adamic youths.

In fact, a broader overview suggests that the one constant and recurring element in all of Quick's fiction up to 1909 was this Adamic hero. All of Quick's fictional heroes up to 1909--Edgar of In the Fairyland of America, Albert Barslow of Aladdin & Co., Florian Amidon of Double Trouble, Emerson Courtright of The Broken Lance, Theodore Carson (and Virginia) of Virginia of the Air Lanes--are essentially romantic innocents.

But it may be asked at this point: what, in addition to romantic innocence, did Quick's hero stand for? Certainly not capitalism (for that is either a serious evil or a ridiculous joke), and only Emerson Courtright stood for socialism, but this positive program of Emerson's was unsuccessful--was unsuccessful, it should be emphasized, in the city, which was for Emerson such an unnatural or awkward environment that it resulted in an unfortunate fall from innocence. In 1909, one could only speculate on where Quick would place--or, perhaps, more favorably find--his fictional hero next.

CHAPTER III

IN QUEST OF FORM AND PLACE, 1909-1921

As the previous chapters have shown, Quick's fictional writings up to 1909 had the major common denominator of a youthful, innocent hero, but this Adamic hero did not have an appropriate and consistent place, occupation, or social belief. Moreover, the literary forms--fairytale, romance, melodrama, novel, satiric romance--suggest that Quick was searching for a proper form in which to present his hero, as well as for an appropriate place, occupation, or social belief.

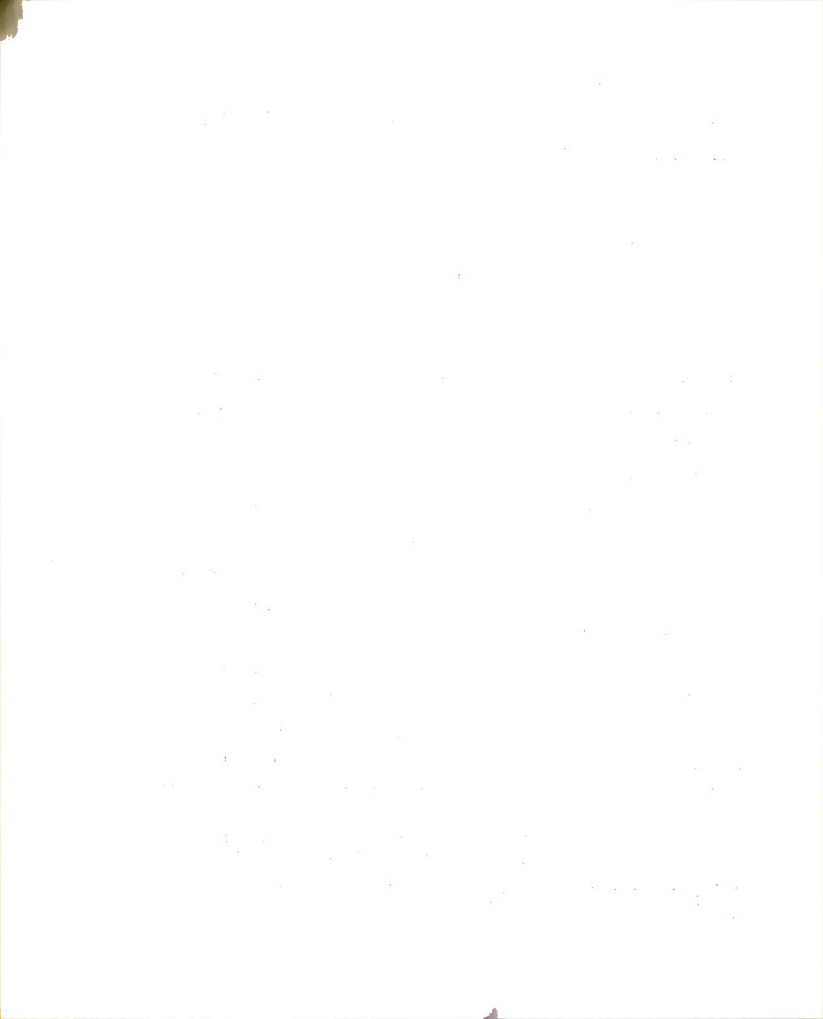
Quick's quest for literary form and proper setting continued from 1909 to 1921, and the fictional works he wrote during these years suggest that while he still had problems in writing fiction he clarified his hero's place, occupation, and social belief. And in clarifying these, Quick completed the conditions of what he considered the true American identity. The purpose of the present chapter is to analyze the works--Yellowstone Nights (1911), The Brown Mouse (1915), The Fairview Idea (1919), and We Have Changed All That (co-authored with Mrs. Elena Stepanoff MacMahon in 1921, published in 1928)--in which Quick continued his search and made his clarification.



The form of Yellowstone Nights is a collection of stories, framed in a manner suggestive of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Quick's frame situation is that of eight sight-seers taking a pleasant trip in a surrey, drawn by four horses, through Yellowstone National Park; at the end of each day's tour, one of the characters takes a turn in telling a "Yellowstone Nights' Entertainment" story to his companions gathered around a campfire of fellowship. Following Chaucer, Quick calls each tale-teller by a generalized or occupational name most of the time; they are the Poet, the Bride and the Groom, the Driver, the Professor, the Hired Man, the Colonel, and the Artist.¹ It is the dove-like Bride (instead of some hearty Harry Bailly) who proposes the plan of story-telling and of drawing the "loser's" name from a hat each evening.

That Quick had Chaucer in mind is also suggested by certain passages in the text of Yellowstone Nights. There is reference to "Thomas à Becket" (p. 41), "the tale of the Patient Griselda" (p. 55), "Zephyrus" (p. 156), one who gives "Pardon" (p. 171), a "'Mr. Clerk'" (p. 173), "lawyers" who are "too busy" (p. 207), a story character named "Absalom" (pp. 211, 215), a "plowman" and "Poet's

¹Individual names are given for all but the Poet and the Artist. The Bride is "Dolly" Aurelia (Amelia) Blunt Helmerston (pp. 6, 42, 47); the Groom is "Billy" Helmerston (pp. 6, 39); the Driver is Aconite Driscoll (p. 7 et passim); the Professor is Oscar Boggs (pp. 153, 206); the Hired Man is Bill Snoke (pp. 183, 195, 207); the Colonel is Baggs (p. 207).



corner" (p. 345). And there is the technique of describing a character through the use of small details (like Chaucer's blue-hooded, brawny Robin Miller, who had a wide nose, a wart thereon and a tuft of red hairs sprouting out of the wart); thus Quick's Groom's description of "Goliath," a "brawny western farmer":

His hat was broad as a prairie. . . . A few dried alfalfa leaves had lodged in the angle between the crown and the brim, and clung there. . . .

His face was enormous but not puffy; and the red veinlets on the cheek and nose had acquired their varicosity by weathering rather than by indulgence. His hair was clipped short. . . . He had a high beak of a nose, with rugged promontories of bone at the bridge, like the shoulders of a hill; and his mouth was . . . huge . . . like the mouth of a cave.

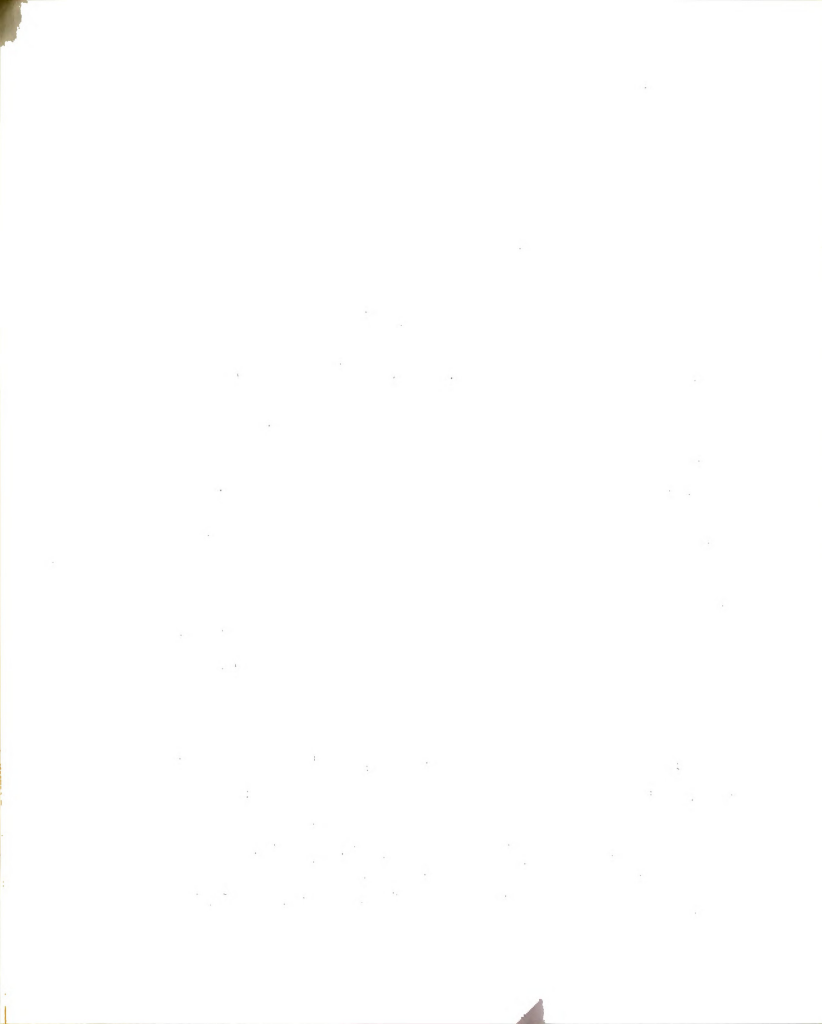
His shirt was of blue flannel. . . . great muscular neck. . . .

His trousers were spotted with the stains of stables; and his huge boots, like barges . . . (pp. 91-93).

Even some of the phraseology in this technique of multiplicity of detail suggests Chaucer. Quick's "His hat was broad as a prairie" brings to mind the Wife of Bath, on whose head was a "hat/ As brood as is a bokeler or a targe." In yet another passage Quick employs the Chaucerian phrase "for the nonce" (p. 146).

Quick even gives a parallel, echoing version of the lover's malady described in Chaucer's Knight's Tale; Quick's Professor's version of this "disease" is as follows:

Whipple Cavanaugh had been idle and 'lawless' since attending school. Refused nourishment. Pillow wet with tears. Kissed Cavanaugh's mare, 'Old Flora,' on nose after Miss Frayn had patted her on said spot. Had written a poem to Roberta, and rather than have it read publicly by the hired girl, who had found it under his pillow, had eaten it, paper, ink,



and all. Doctor Dilworthy called in; pronounced him in danger of gastritis and love-sickness with grave prognosis (pp. 166-167).

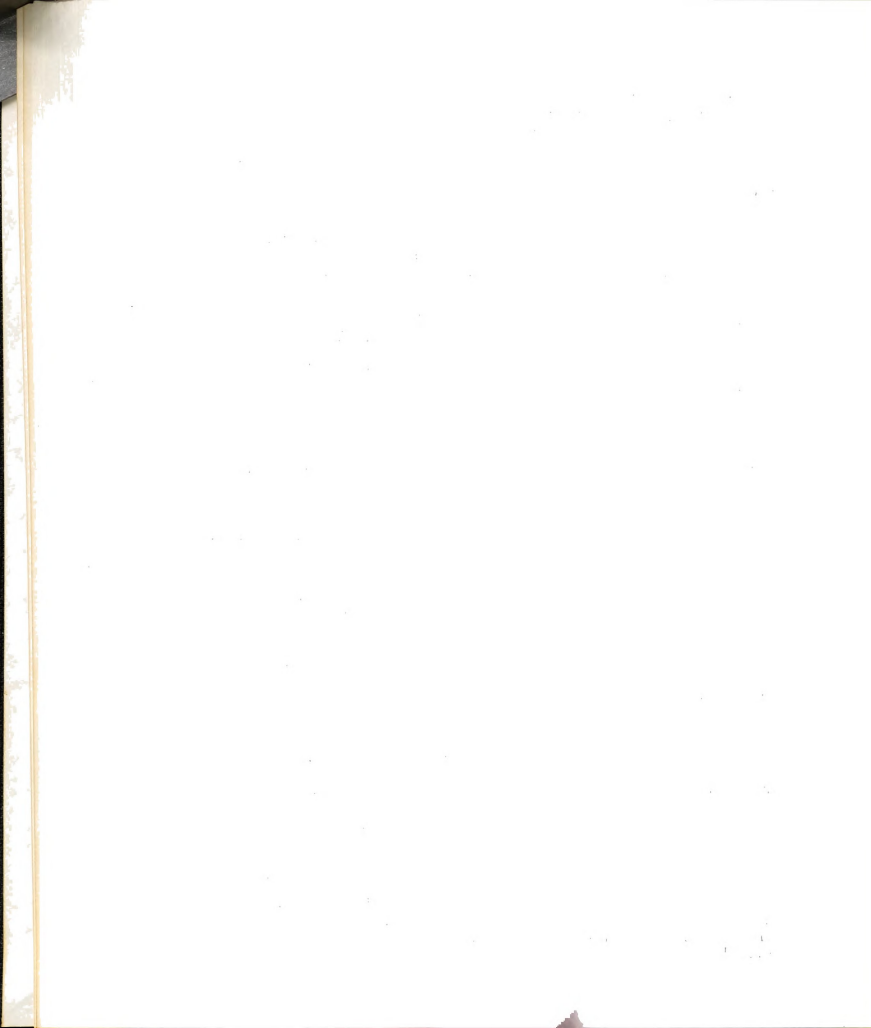
In additional satire, Quick's Professor comments on modern, not medieval-renaissance, scientific jargon:

There was a certificate of Doctor Dilworthy of Teal Lake as to the existence of many cases of 'extreme mental exaltation accompanied by explosive and fulminant cerebral disturbances traceable to mediate or immediate association with one Roberta Lee Frayn, an individual seemingly possessed of an abnormal power in the way of causing obsessions, fixed ideas, aberrant cranio-spinal functionings, and cranial tempests, in those of her associates resembling her in the matter of age, and differing from her in social habits, hereditary, constitution, and sex' (pp. 167-168).

The Professor, whose story is one of the best, also makes humor of "medieval notions of honor and personal dignity" and the "Iowa Code" (pp. 171-172).

There are twelve or thirteen stories in Yellowstone Nights, depending on how one counts,² and not counting the brief anecdotal legends about the Park which are woven into the links between the stories proper. These stories are given in the following order: "A Telepathic Tragedy, Being the Story Told by the Minor Poet," "The Triumph of Billy Hell, The Story Told by the Bride," "The Triumph of Billy Hell, The Second Part of the Bride's Story" (which has the same characters but a different thematic statement, and it appears in a separate chapter, just like any of the other stories), "The Heart of Goliath, The Story Told by the

²If the "Second Part" of the Bride's story is considered as a continuation of the one story allotted her, then the book contains twelve stories; if not, then a baker's dozen.



Groom," "The Tale of the Ten Thousand Dogies, The Tale Told by the Driver," "A Belated Rebel Invasion, The Professor's Story," "From Alpha to Omega, The Hired Man's Story," "The Law and Amelia Whinnery, The Tale of Colonel Baggs of Omaha," "Henry Peters's Signature, The Hired Man's Second Tale," "The Return of John Smith, The Story Narrated by the Artist," "The Federal Imp Company, The Professor's Second Tale," "The Jilting of Mr. Driscoll, Aconite's Second Tale," and "The Stalking of Pauguk, The Poet's Second Story."

Of these stories, at least three were previously and separately published (with very slight differences): "Between Alpha and Omega," Putnam's (November, 1908), "Old Hen and the Experts," Century (February, 1909), and "Telepathic Tragedy," Cosmopolitan (March, 1909). The "Old Hen" story was retitled "Henry Peters's Signature" in the book's collection.

The same question that George Lyman Kittredge asked of Chaucer's Tales may with profit be asked of Quick's Nights: do the stories stand by themselves or are they illustrations of the characters who tell them? There can be little doubt that Quick intended the latter alternative. The outstanding possible exceptions are the three tales previously published, which are relatively weak stories and which have signs of being rather expediently injected into the framework plan that Quick conceived sometime between 1909 and 1911. For example, Quick as omniscient narrator refers to "Henry Peters's Signature" as an "unimportant



tale" (p. 221)--unimportant because it does not contribute significantly to the real drama developing as the little company of tourists make their half-month journey through the wonders of the Park.

As in Chaucer's Tales, Quick's company splits into factions. Friendships are made for the nonce. Quarrels flare and come dangerously close to getting out of hand. Tales are even interrupted in the midst of their telling. Debates are conducted on the subjects of law and business ethics, and love and marriage. The central and most sustained quarrel motif is that involving the Bride vs. the Colonel. This key motif should be examined in detail in order to discover the overall theme of the book.

At the beginning of the journey, "all looked at the Bride [the only female present] as commander-in-chief" (p. 8), but it is only moments later that the Colonel begins to challenge the wisdom of that evaluation, for when the Bride becomes excited over the first sight, "the huge stream of hot water where Boiling River bursts from its opening in the rocks, and falls steaming into the Gardiner":

Colonel Baggs asserted that hot water is hot water, no matter where found or in whatever quantities, and couldn't be considered much of a wonder (p. 9).

And when the "Bride and Groom announced their intention to take pot luck with the rest, though the great hotel was ready for their reception," the Colonel sarcastically remarks:



'We are honored, I am sure. Would that we had a troupe of performing nightingales to clothe the night with charm fit for so lovely a member of the party' (p. 10).

The Bride rejoins, "Oh, thank you ever so much, but"--and then proposes her plan for story-telling. These are the small beginnings of the antagonism between the Bride, who tries to appear as a sweet young thing of innocence, and the Colonel, who makes no bones about his age and experience--the Colonel is the only one to have visited the Park before, thirty-three years earlier (p. 21).

The Bride, abiding by the rules she herself made, has her name drawn for the telling of the second story, and she delivers the "only one story a bride can tell" (p. 27), the story of courtship. In the middle of her story about Billy, who was a sort of "hobo" with no worldly goods but who successfully courted in the American way the boss's daughter, the Bride is interrupted by another sarcastic remark of the Colonel's: "'Blessed be the hobo, for he shall reach paradise!'" (p. 35). Apparently unruffled, the Bride continues to tell how she, in the story, playfully deceived her Billy concerning her identity, calling herself Amelia when her real name was Aurelia. Then she concludes by promising another part of her story for the following evening around the campfire--which would, in a sense, give her a chance to tell two stories even though her name was drawn but once.

The Colonel--noting the Bride's penchant for deception as given in her story, her mild flirtation with the



Poet in the group (pp. 11, 28, 54), and her demonstration of toying with the rules of the company's game--has some justification for interrupting the Bride's "second" story before she even gets started in telling it. The Colonel does this by starting an uncalled-for tale of his own, based upon his previous experience in the Park, a tall-tale about the Nez Percè Creek (pp. 54-59)--thereby flinging down and all but dancing on the Bride's rule for law and order. The Hired Man and the Poet side with the Bride and try to stop the Colonel:

'Here,' said the Hired Man [to the Colonel].
 'You tell the rest of this to marines.'

 'Thank God!' breathed the Poet. 'Even a Montana hotel was a sweet boon as bringing the end of these troubles' (p. 58).

But the Colonel is not easily stopped: "'Who said it was the end?' inquired the Colonel. 'It wasn't'" (p. 58). And he goes merrily on with his tall-tale. The Bride employs her naivete for criticism, and the Colonel finally stops talking, though he has Aconite the Driver on his side:

'And all that took place right here?' asked the Bride.
 'Here and hereabouts,' answered the Colonel.
 'I was here about the time, and I know.'
 . . . said Aconite. . . . 'The Colonel's correct. The tale is true!'

 'So you don't want the rest of [my] story?' she queried.
 'Ma'am,' said the Hired Man. 'We should all be darned sorry to lose you . . . ' (p. 59).

Although the Bride's second story concludes with her approaching marriage to Billy, thereby linking this to



her first story, this second story is largely devoted to explaining a business transaction and makes the thematic statement that the staging of a deception is ethical business. Her first story says that all is fair in love; her second, in business. The Colonel has time enough to ponder these doctrines while four intervening tales are told, and then he delivers his story-reply.

There are too many aspects of the Colonel's story for it not to have been aimed at the Bride. First, the title is "The Law and Amelia Whinnery," using a name, Amelia, the Bride had used in reference to herself. Second, Amelia Whinnery's lover's name is Bill Williams, a name doubly suggestive of the name of the Bride's lover and subsequent husband, Billy, who by the Bride's own admission had learned or exhibited crooked or deceptive ways during his association with her. In the Colonel's story, Miss Whinnery's husband's name is Bob Fink, who during his courtship of her exhibited deception also. The other major character in the Colonel's story is named Absolom Scales, the defending attorney for the C. & S. W. Railroad, whose name suggests not only an instrument of justice but also a character in Chaucer's rather racy Miller's Tale.

The Colonel relates that Amelia was an opportunistic schoolteacher who was involved one fine night in a bus-train accident and apparently shocked speechless thereby, and who sued the C. & S. W. Company and in the process married her attorney, Bob Fink, whose victorious reward, the Colonel



says, was a questionable maidenly virtue. The Colonel says this by means of suggestive diction (*italics added below*); and Quick displays an excellent comic touch when he allows the Bride of Yellowstone Nights demonstrate that she, at least, is not speechless:

'We [the Colonel and Absolom] proved that she [Miss Whinnery] was doing right well financially when the railroad put her out of business by failing to ring a bell or toot a whistle at the crossing coming into Tovala, and catching Bill Williams' bus asleep at the switch. Miss Whinnery was in the bus. When it was all over, she was in pretty fair shape--'

'Naturally,' interpolated the Artist. 'Excepting that her nerves had got some kind of shock and she was robbed permanently of the power of speech.'

'How terrible!' exclaimed the Bride (p. 209).

Miss Whinnery shows her physically alluring "shape" at the trial, where she wears a "close-fitting dress" (p. 209); and although she was probably not pregnant, the Colonel leaves little doubt about her posturings on the night in question; for after the trial, which Bob Pink wins by playing on the "poor girl" sympathies and anti-railroad prejudices of the jury (and despite his knowledge of Amelia's merely acting dumb), Bill Williams appears to confront the new bride and groom with a claim of his own:

Well, Bill comes in with his claim against Amelia and Bob for two or three hundred dollars for his bus. They disdainfully gave him the ha-ha.

'Then,' says Bill Williams, 'I will tell all, woman!'

Amelia flushed, and looked inquiringly at Bob. Bob walked up to Bill and hissed: 'What do you mean, you hound, by insulting my wife in this way!'

'She knows what I mean,' yelled Bill, turning on Amelia. 'Ask your wife what she an' I was talkin' about when we was a-crossing the track that time. Ask her if she didn't say to me that



I was the perfec'ly perportioned physical man, an' whether I didn't think that men an' women of sech perportions should mate; an' if she didn't make goo-goo eyes at me, ontill I stuck back my head to kiss her, an' whether she wasn't a-kissin' me when that freight come a pirootin' down an' run over her talkin' apparatus! Ask her if she didn't say she could die a-kissin' me, an' if she didn't come danged near doin' it!'

'How perfectly horrid!' gasped the Bride (p. 213).

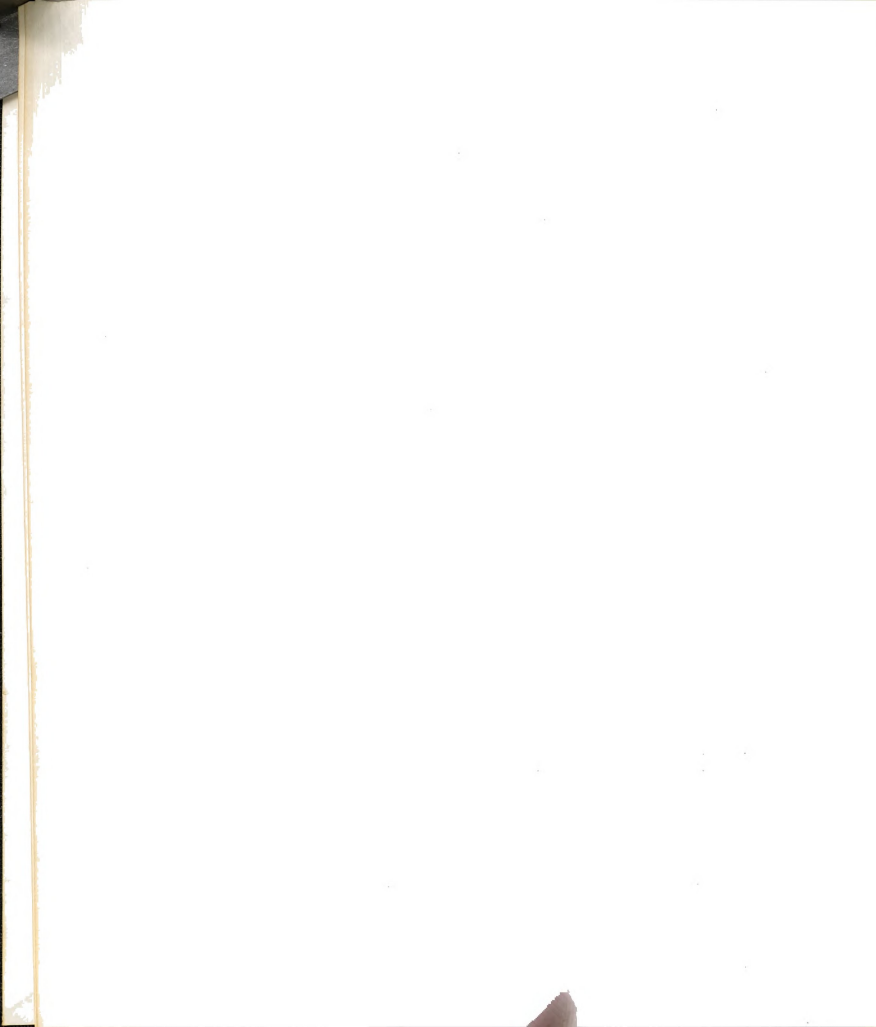
Hearing this bit about what may be called the untimely kiss, the gasping Bride nearly loses the power of her own "talkin' apparatus"; but when "Amelia Whinnery Fink, defendant in error, and permanently dumb, turned loose" with a torrent of words hotly protesting and defending her honor, the Bride loudly interjects: "'I don't blame her!'" (p. 214).

The Colonel ends his story by saying that the court did not reverse its previous decision about the dumb Amelia, that the court was very wise, never to be criticized, and that the whole case was "locally regarded as a good joke on the railroad" (p. 216), and of course on Absolom, who was left out in the cold, as it were, along with the true justice and good faith he represented. This story has its effect on the Bride and makes her think; she is the first to respond to the Colonel:

'But was it honest?' queried the Bride.

'Honest, me lady!' repeated the Colonel,
a la Othello (p. 216).

Subsequent examples of the quarrel motif of the Bride vs. the Colonel may be briefly noted. In the very next chapter-link, after the Colonel's story, the Bride, who had previously been rather enthusiastic about the wonders of the Park, says, dejectedly, of a Park wonder,



"'I don't care much for this'"--and the Colonel, with an exhilaration born of his successful tale, says, "'What's the next marvel?'" (p. 218). When the Bride comments on "'how peaceful and sort of comforting the river is . . . as placid as a lake--or some deep river--like the Thames--made for pleasure boats . . .,'" the Colonel, with his shout "'See the trout leap!'", suggests an opposite view (p. 245). Toward the end of the book, the Bride sees "another monument placed . . . by the gods with manifest intention," and another flare-up between her and the Colonel occurs:

'Reminds me of the providential way that rivers always run past cities, just where they are needed,' carped the Colonel.

'It isn't the same thing,' said the Bride hotly. 'You're getting mean, Colonel!'

'Honing for the wrangle of the courts, Bride,' said he. 'I apologize' (pp. 294-295).

In the book's last paragraph the Bride bids all good-by, but she names the Colonel last and her tone is less favorable toward him; she also knits up the unity of the book-- "'We have made a continued story of our trip . . .'" (p. 345).

The respective characters of the quarreling Bride and Colonel represent a continuation of a major problem that Quick had dealt with in his previous fiction: the vexed problem of innocence vs. experience. The young Bride is apparently a romantic innocent but, in view of the Colonel's quarrel with her, it is suggested that she might well be a hypocrite too. The old Colonel, for his part, is apparently the voice of realistic and pragmatic experience, but in the

last analysis he has not lost his idealistic or innocent values (which do not include deceptions, nor illicit flirtations and affairs). It is thus entirely understandable and fitting that Quick's Bride and Colonel were impelled to quarrel.

Quick's theme in Yellowstone Nights is a question--where or in whom can true innocence be found?--and it is illustrated by several tales in the book's collection. There is the Bride's second story of the by-hook-or-by-crook rise of Billy from rags to riches, thereby raising the question of the moral rightness of an American myth formula. There is the Professor's story of "A Belated Rebel Invasion," which is a spoof on American courts as an instrument for righteous progress. There is the Colonel's story, which not only attacks the Bride but also has the thesis that, like the Professor's story, the courts are legally constituted for wrong-doing. There is the Artist's serious tale, "The Return of John Smith," with its thesis that one should leave the courts and look elsewhere for justice, truth, and unspoiled conditions, such as back on the farm and next to nature. There is the Professor's second tale, "The Federal Imp Company," which likens business trusts to Satan incarnated. And there is the final tale in the series, the Poet's second, "The Stalking of Pauguk," which relates how an American businessman, burdened with the guilt of his business success, stalks Death in the Minnesota woods.



It is important to emphasize here that in allowing different characters to tell the tales and to give the various and quarreling viewpoints, Quick escaped a principal failure of his previous fictional works, each of which, it will be recalled, had a single narrator plagued by mixed or inconsistent views and literary styles. In Yellowstone Nights each character-narrator says what he has to say in his own way. For example, the Driver, in his "The Tale of Ten Thousand Dogies," speaks in a Western dialect which is consistent and appropriate; the Bride, on the other hand, imitates the literary style of the "romances" which she has read and which, appropriately enough, she insists her companions in the Park also tell (though, of course, they do not carry out her wishes in this regard). Yet, for all the quarreling and the suitable diversity of styles, the book has an overall unity; the journey through the Park is, as the Bride says, "a continued story."

For behind all the tales in Yellowstone Nights is the land where they are told; and, in addition to the quarrel motifs that are woven throughout the entire text, the unity of the book is made clear by these landscape descriptions which are found in the links between the tales proper and which constitute one-fifth of the book. These descriptions of the Park show it in a highly favorable light, and the wondrous land often has a pacifying effect on those tourists whose quarrels might otherwise get out of hand. Quick the overall-narrator is rapturous in describing



this land, as for example when the tourists make a turn and "suddenly":

. . . there burst upon their sight that most marvelous of inland seas, Yellowstone Lake. Straight away extended its waters, for twenty miles, to the dim shores of Elk Point, where the pines carried the wonderful landscape upward, their gloom cutting straight across the view, between the mirror-like sheen of the lake, to timber-line on the azure Absarokas, standing serenely across the eastern sky, their serrated summits picked out with snow against the blue (p. 150).

In the paragraph immediately following, Quick suggests that this wondrous and breath-takingly beautiful land is symbolic of a religion and has the soothing effects of a religion:

A huge chalice lay the lake, reared to a height of a mile and a half above the dusty and furrowed earth where folk plow and dig and make their livings, the crown jewel of the continent's diadem, unutterably, indescribably lovely, filled with crystalline dew. The tourists caught their breaths. Aconite said nothing. For a long time they stood, until the horses began to move backward and forward, uneasy at the unwonted stay. The Bride was holding the Groom's hand, her eyes glistening with tears (pp. 150-151).

In such an unspoiled, Edenic setting, quarrels cannot become seriously sour.

Just as Chaucer's pilgrims journey to the shrine at Canterbury, so also do Quick's tourists make a pilgrimage to the virgin land, or, as it is frequently called, the "heavenly" land. One reason why it is "heavenly" is that the tourists (and indeed all other citizens) own it in common:

The sense of ownership grew upon them. Here was their own pleasure-ground. It was theirs by virtue of their citizenship. They might not visit it often--though all declared their intention of coming back every summer--but, anyhow, it would be fine to know



that here on the summit of the continent was this wonderland, owned by them and each of them (pp. 185-186).

The government-owned Park is an Edenic sanctuary of natural healing powers, set apart from such troubles down below as those which bedeviled Emerson Courtright in The Broken Lance. Set on the summit of the continent, Yellowstone National Park is thankfully out of the reach of capitalistic land speculators.³

What Quick clearly located in Yellowstone Nights was the object of his fictional search, namely, the lost Adamic place. This Adamic landscape was the proper object of wondrous worship and pilgrimage. Yet how--caught up in contemporary problems associated chiefly with the rapid urbanization (hence degeneration) of America--how could one preserve or recapture Adamic innocence down below? Or, what should the pilgrims do after they left the Park? Quick gave a key answer to this question in his next two works of fiction, or rather semifiction, The Brown Mouse (1915) and The Fairview Idea (1919).

The Brown Mouse contains the fictional elements of story and character, but its propagandistic purpose so dominates these elements that they are often lost sight of.

³Quick was preaching against land speculators in his nonfictional writings, too. For example, in his Farm and Fireside editorial of October 11, 1911, he said that the pests (in Florida) are not the "fleas, snakes, 'red bugs' and mosquitoes," since there "are remedies for them all," but rather "the greatest pests . . . [are] the land-shark and real-estate pirates."



The social propaganda is so explicit that many passages in this book are scarcely distinguishable from the nonfiction Quick wrote from 1909 to 1921, such as his semimonthly editorials in Farm and Fireside and the speeches he prepared in connection with his position in the Federal Farm Loan Bureau. As a matter of fact, The Brown Mouse is an expanded--and fictionalized--version of a speech which Quick delivered in 1911 at Madison, Wisconsin, entitled "The Rural Awakening in Its Relation to Civic and Social Center Development."⁴ In any case, the purpose of The Brown Mouse is unmistakably clear: to promote a "new kind of rural school" (p. 32). But before discussing that purpose in detail, the story and characterization should be reviewed.

The main character is Jim Irwin, the twenty-eight-year-old son of a poor family in rural Iowa of the twentieth century. He is depicted (by a third-person narrator) as a "clodhopper" who has educated himself by reading dime novels, various farm papers, and the works of such writers as Emerson, Thoreau, Ruskin, Carlyle, Shakespeare, and Byron (pp. 10-11, 13), of whom his favorite is Emerson. In fact, Jim's way of thinking is basically Emersonian, as is shown, for example, by his response to Colonel Woodruff's "dictum, 'Any job's as big as the man who holds it down'": this "was an Emersonian truism to Jim" (p. 47).

⁴Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin (Madison, 1912), Ser. No. 474, Gen. Ser. No. 310. Quick gave a shorter version of this "Address delivered before the First National Conference on Civic and Social Center Development" in his Farm and Fireside editorial of January 6, 1912.

Tall and slim, and ignorant in the matter of stylish clothes, Jim is often likened to Abraham Lincoln: Jim "had fine, lambent, gentle eyes which lighted up his face when he smiled, as Lincoln's illuminated his" (p. 10). The "Lincolnian smile" (pp. 39, 53) is the most prominent physical feature of "the gangling, Lincolnian, ill-dressed, poverty-stricken Jim Irwin" (p. 210). As the story develops, Jim's mission becomes the freeing of the slaves to conformity, the slaves to an educational tradition in the contemporary rural Iowa community.

At the beginning of the story, Jim, despite having been a star pupil in school and despite having earned a teacher's certificate, is still just a hired farm-hand. He does not teach because the salary is so low that it would not support him and any wife he might select; he also does not like the methods of the school. Instead, he works on Colonel Woodruff's farm, where he can at least be near the girl of his dreams, the Colonel's daughter, Jennie.

It is Jennie Woodruff who rekindles Jim's ambition to make something of himself; but, contrary to Jennie's suggestion (that he seek fame and fortune in the big city), Jim is determined to stay in the country--because, as he puts it, "I love the soil!" (p. 5). Also, to improve himself and his station in life, Jim thinks that he must reform the society in which he lives--much like Emerson Courtright (except that Courtright sought to reform a city society, not a rural one). Jim's key to rural reform is

his theory of educational method.

Jim is prompted to make his new educational theory a reality when he finally proposes marriage and receives Jennie's prompt reply of "Humph!" (in Chapter I, "A Maiden's 'Humph!'"). Determined to make a name for himself and to become worthy of Jennie, Jim runs for the position of schoolteacher, is elected (unintentionally by the typically--and, in this case, ironically--incompetent school board), and proceeds to institute his own program in the school. Throughout the story, Jim has the backing of Colonel Woodruff but the questionable support of Jennie, who becomes the county superintendent and supposed guardian of the traditional educational methods.

These traditional methods are simply based on textbooks which were written for city children, not rural children. Also, some of the subjects taught, such as Latin, have a dubious value anywhere in twentieth-century America, as far as the majority of the pupils are concerned. Again and again Jim argues for the new methods, as for example in the following conversation with Jennie:

'Jim,' said she, 'you're going to have a hard enough time to succeed in the Woodruff school, if you confine yourself to methods that have been tested and found good.'

'But the old methods,' urged Jim, 'have been tested and found bad. Shall I keep to them?'

'They have made the American people what they are,' said Jennie. 'Don't be unpatriotic, Jim.'

'They have educated our farm children for the cities,' said Jim. 'This country is losing population--and it's the best country in the world.'

'Pessimism never wins,' said Jennie.

'Neither does blindness,' answered Jim. 'It is

losing the farms their dwellers, and swelling the cities with a proletariat' (pp. 60-61).

This propagandistic dialogue is wordily dominant in the book; another example follows:

'Jim,' she said pleadingly, 'I want you to give up this sort of teaching. Can't you see it's all wrong?'

'No,' answered Jim, in much the manner of a man who has been stabbed by his sweetheart. 'I can't see that it's wrong. It's the only sort I can do. What do you see wrong in it?'

'Oh, I can see some very wonderful things in it,' said Jennie, 'but it can't be done in the Woodruff District. It may be correct in theory, but it won't work in practise.'

'Jennie,' said he, 'when a thing won't work, it isn't correct in theory.'

'Well, then, Jim,' said she, 'why do you keep on with it?'

'It works,' said Jim. 'Anything that's correct in theory will work. If the theory seems correct, and yet won't work, it's because something is wrong in an unsuspected way with the theory. But my theory is correct, and it works' (pp. 138-139).

Jim's educational theory and program is pragmatic; as he says:

'Froebel, Pestalozzi, Colonel Parker--they all had the idea which is at the bottom of my work; "learn to do by doing," and connecting up the school with life' (p. 242).

Jim believes that the farm children should learn lessons and practice skills which will fit them for life on the farm, not in the city. And it is in this regard that the book's propagandistic purpose overshadows the rather frail story framework.

Indeed, The Brown Mouse contains so many specific lessons or teaching tips that it is a sort of manual for pragmatic rural schoolteachers. A typical schoolroom where

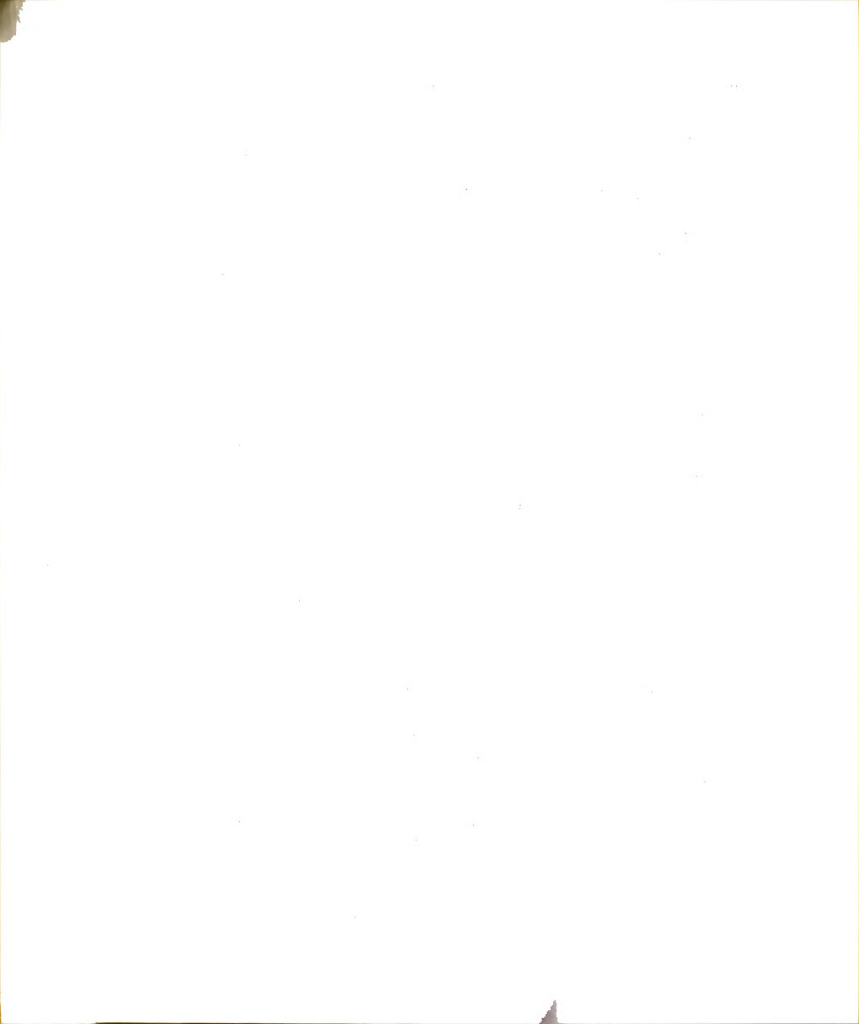
such teachers would guide their pupils is described as follows:

To be sure, there were on the blackboards exercises and outlines, of lessons in language, history, mathematics, geography and the like. But these were not the usual things taken from text-books. The problems in arithmetic were calculations as to the feeding value of various rations for live stock, records of laying hens and computation as to the excess of value in eggs produced over the cost of feed. Pinned to the wall were market reports on all sorts of farm products, and especially numerous were the statistics on the prices of cream and butter. There were files of farm papers piled about, and racks of agricultural bulletins. In one corner of the room was a typewriting machine, and in another a sewing machine. Parts of an old telephone were scattered about on the teacher's desk. A model of piggery stood on a shelf, done in cardboard. Instead of the usual collection of text-books in the desk, there were hectography copies of exercises, reading lessons, arithmetical tables and essays on various matters relating to agriculture . . . (pp. 70-71).

A typical morning in Jim's school for life-adjustment is narrated as follows:

This morning, Jim had arranged in various sorts of dishes specimens of grain and grass seeds. By each was a card bearing the name of the farm from which one of the older boys or girls had brought it. 'Wheat, Scotch Fife, from the farm of Columbus Smith.' 'Timothy, or Herd's Grass, from the farm of A. B. Talcott.' 'Alsike Clover, from the farm of B. B. Hamm.' Each lot was in a small cloth bag which had been made by one of the little girls as a sewing exercise; and each card had been written as a lesson in penmanship by one of the younger pupils, and contained, in addition to the data mentioned above, heads under which to enter the number of grains of the seed examined, the number which grew, the percentage of viability, the number of alien seeds of weeds and other sorts, the names of these adulterants, the weight of true and vitalized, and of fowl and alien and dead seeds, the value per bushel in the local market of the seeds under test, and the real market values of the samples, after dead seeds and alien matter had been subtracted (pp. 83-84).

Nor are such matters as lessons on traditional literature



neglected, for on this particular morning: "The reading lesson was an article on corn condensed from a farm paper, and a selection from Hiawatha--the Indian-corn myth" (p. 85). The pupils find that attending this school is "a frolic, rather than a task" (p. 84), and Jim becomes their idol.

But the adults in the community, particularly those on the school board, need further convincing. And the narrator exploits scenes outside of the classroom, as well as inside, for his propagandistic purpose. For example, there is the scene of the dinner at the Woodruffs:

'I'd like to see the school class that could prepare this dinner,' said Mrs. Woodruff.

'Why,' said Jim, 'you'd be there showing them now! They'd get credits in their domestic-economy course for getting the school dinner--and they'd bring their mothers into it to help them stand at the head of their classes. And one detail of girls would cook one week, and another serve. The setting of the table would come in as a study--flowers, linen and all that. And when we get a civilized teacher, table manners!' (pp. 118-119).

In his very next outburst, Jim blends his Emersonian way of thinking (of seeing the relationship among various things) with his enthusiasm for pragmatic, utilitarian education:

'And when the food came on the table,' Jim went on . . . 'just think of the things we could study while eating it. The literary term for eating a meal is discussing it--well, the discussion of a meal under proper guidance is much more educative than a lecture. This breast-bone, now,' said he, referring to the remains on his plate. 'That's physiology. The cranberry-sauce--that's botany, and commerce, and soil management--do you know, Colonel, that cranberry must have an acid soil--which would kill alfalfa or clover? . . .

'And the difference between the types of fowl on the table--that's breeding. And the nutmeg, pepper and cocoanut--that's geography. And everything on the table runs back to geography, and comes to us linked



to our lives by dollars and cents--and they're mathematics' (pp. 119-120).

The voice of the school board, Superintendent Jennie, objects to this pragmatic doctrine:

'We must have something more than dollars and cents in life. . . . We must have culture.'

'Culture,' cried Jim, 'is the ability to think in terms of life--isn't it?' (p. 120).

Because of Jim's nonconformity (to the traditional definition of culture and methods of education), Colonel Woodruff calls him a "Brown Mouse." Quick probably got the idea of a "Brown Mouse" from his reading of farm papers during his youth in Iowa; in any case, the Colonel explains this quaint term as follows:

'A fellow in Edinburgh . . . crossed the Japanese waltzing mouse with the common white mouse. Jim's peddling father was a waltzing mouse, no good except to jump from one spot to another for no good reason. Jim's mother is an albino of a woman, with all the color washed out in one way or another. Jim ought to be a mongrel, and I've always considered him one. But the Edinburgh fellow every once in a while got out of his variously-colored, waltzing and albino hybrids, a brown mouse. It wasn't a common house mouse, either, but a wild mouse unlike any he had ever seen. It ran away, and bit and gnawed, and raised hob. It was what we breeders call a Mendelian segregation of genetic factors that had been in the waltzers and albinos all the time--their original wild ancestor of the woods and fields. If Jim turns out to be a Brown Mouse, he may be a bigger man than any of us. Anyhow, I'm for him' (pp. 45-46).

Moreover, such a mouse stimulates change:

'Napoleon Bonaparte was a Brown Mouse,' said the colonel. 'So was George Washington, and so was Peter the Great. Whenever a Brown Mouse appears he changes things in a little way or a big way.'

'For the better, always?' asked Jennie.

'No,' said the colonel. 'The Brown Mouse may throw back to slant-headed savagery. But Jim . . .

sometimes I think Jim is the kind of Mendelian segregation out of which we get Franklins and Edisons and their sort' (p. 105).

It need hardly be elaborated that since 1915 the public schools and colleges of America have become filled with pragmatic Brown Mice.

In The Brown Mouse, one of the main changes effected by Jim Irwin is the attitude of the pupils, of whom Newton Bronson is the chief example. Newton had disliked school, skipping it often and spending too much of his time roaming the woods with other "Boy Trappers" and imitating in games such dime-novel heroes as Dead-Shot Dick (p. 75). Without meaningful guidance in his boyhood, Newton would later leave the country to seek more spectacular frivolities in the city. But he is spared that fate because of the "savior" Jim Irwin, who has remembered only too well his own ragged and aimless "Boyville." Newton, of course, becomes a regular attendee at the "truly rural rural-school" and bent on becoming a successful farmer in that district.

Jim understands the parents as well as the children of the community. He makes a "survey" of all the farms in the district; he

. . . had note-books full of facts about people and their farms. He knew how many acres each family possessed, and what sort of farming each husband was doing --live stock, grain or mixed. He knew about the mortgages, and the debts . . . the horses, the automobiles, the silo-filling machinery and the profits of farming (pp. 51-52).

With all his gathered information, Jim is in a key position to recommend improvements for all the farmers, and he argues

for a "cooperative" way of life; for example, he says to the farmers:

'Let's get together and pool our cream. By that, I mean that we'll all sell to the same creamery, and get the best we can out of the centralizers by the cooperative method. We can save two cents a pound in that way, and we'll learn to cooperate. When we have found just how well we can hang together, we'll be able to take up the cooperative creamery, with less danger of falling apart and failing.'

'Who'll handle the pool?' inquired Mr. Hansen.

'We'll handle it in the school,' answered Jim (p. 214).

In fact, everything is to be handled in the new rural school, which is to be not only the "educational center" and the "business center" but also the "social center" of the country-side--a center into which all would be drawn "like a swarm of bees into a hive" (pp. 271, 299). This school-house is to be a "twentieth-century temple" for parents and children alike, with Jim as its "chief priest" (p. 309).

This, then, is what the pilgrims of Yellowstone Nights should do after they leave the Park: they should return to their rural homes and stay put. They should not allow themselves to be drawn by the city-magnet, which in all likelihood will produce a profound moral crisis; as the Brown Mouse's narrator, in total abandonment of a fictional tone (evidenced by the "I"), explains:

A moral crisis accompanies the passing of a man from the struggle with the soil to any occupation, the productiveness of which is not quite so clear. . . .

I think there is a real moral principle involved. I believe that this deep instinct for labor in and about the soil is a valid one, and that the gathering together of people in cities has been at the cost of an obscure but actual moral shock.

I doubt if the people of the cities can ever be



at rest in a future full of moral searchings of conscience until every man has traced definitely the connection of the work he is doing with the maintenance of his country's population. Sometimes those vocations whose connection can not be so traced will be recognized as wicked ones . . . (pp. 204-205).

In a larger sense, Quick's purpose in The Brown Mouse was to pump new life into a Jeffersonian agrarianism, or what Henry Nash Smith has called "the Myth of the Garden."⁵ America would be made strong only if it had enough farmers, and these farmers would stay in the God-given country only if they received, as boys, the pragmatic education which would keep them there. To Quick, saving the Adamic boy depended on keeping him in Eden, where he would, under proper educational guidance, naturally learn to love the soil and to derive joy from tending it. Moreover, those who were lured east of Eden were to be more pitied than condemned; they could well be reminded of their paradise lost--if, for instance, the farm folk sent them surplus flowers, fruits, jellies, "little shipments of rural life, little glimpses of heaven"⁶--and perhaps be persuaded to return to the meaningful life next to nature.

Quick's purpose in The Brown Mouse was essentially repeated in The Fairview Idea: A Story of the New Rural Life (1919). Both books are propagandistic, semifictional works in behalf of American rural life. Both deal with

⁵Virgin Land: The American West as Myth and Symbol (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 124 et passim.

⁶"With the Editor," Farm and Fireside, June 8, 1912, p. 2.

what Quick considered the most important contemporary danger, the drift to the cities, and both give specific solutions designed, hopefully, to keep people in the country. If anything, The Fairview Idea is even more explicit in propagandizing this good life on the farm; as Quick stated in his preface to this work: "This book is a plea for a better morale in rural life" (p. xi).

Yet, although he had settled on a clear purpose, Quick experimented once again with the fictional, or semi-fictional, form. For the boosting of rural morale in The Fairview Idea is not given in just one story, as might be suggested by the book's subtitle and as was the case in The Brown Mouse, but rather in a series of stories. In form, the book is thus like Yellowstone Nights, except that in The Fairview Idea the chapters are not so much stories as they are each a combination of story and essay, and the narrator finally and correctly calls them "sketches" (p. 258). If The Fairview Idea has any overall unity of form, it is provided by the theme of promoting a new rural life, by the setting of agrarian Iowa (though as a landscape setting it is scarcely described), and by the fact that all the sketches are told by the same first-person narrator, an old farmer named Abner Dunham.

In the light of his later achievement, in Vandemark's Folly (1922), it is significant that Quick chose a first-person narrator in The Fairview Idea. Quick had avoided using this viewpoint in fiction since writing

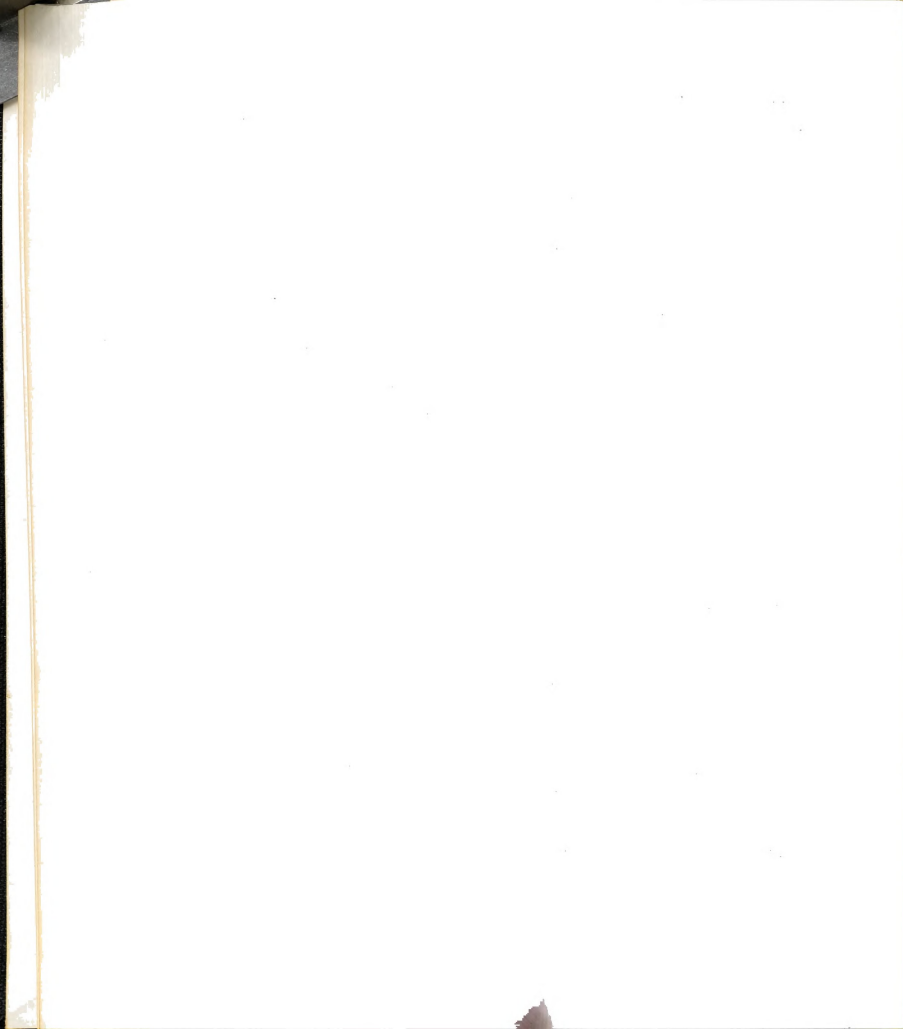


Aladdin & Co. (1904). Now, in 1919, he was returning to it, along with the autobiographical mode it suggests. A significant development in the use of this "I" persona is that Albert Barslow, in Aladdin & Co., was a relatively young narrator who was more than willing to take his chances in helping to build a city, whereas Abner Dunham is old and will not dream of leaving his farm. More significantly, Abner is Quick's first recognizable character who precedes and resembles the old farmer who narrates Vandemark's Folly, the chief difference between these two narrators being, it may be noted here, that Abner is concerned almost wholly with problems and solutions of his contemporary American society (just after World War I).

The character of Abner is spelled out in the first chapter of The Fairview Idea. Considered "the most eminent mossback in the countryside," he disagrees with his neighbors' opinion of him. Actually, the key to his character is derived from a couplet of Alexander Pope's, which he quotes as his "motto":

Be not the first by whom the new is tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside (p. 1).

As an instance of this motto, he cites that he "was not the first, by any means, to try that new mode of locomotion, the automobile; neither the last to cast aside the horse and buggy" (p. 2). Abner's attaching of his old buggy whip to the dashboard of his new car helps to symbolize that he is a transitional character in American society, a society that was changing too rapidly and becoming overurbanized. Abner,



for one, "still refuse[s] to retire from the farm and the Fairview neighborhood" and in the rest of the book he gives his "good reasons for that eccentric course too" (p. 3).

As Abner gives his reasons, in ten sketches, it becomes clear that Quick had in mind the Adamic myth. Only the names have been changed, and the brief Biblical version is, in Quick's book, expanded, made specific and meaningful, in effect translated for the contemporary American audience. Fairview is Abner-Quick's name here for the Garden of Eden, "God's garden" (p. 249). Certain chapter titles also suggest the myth: "The Boys' Revolt in Fairview" (III), "Sex Rebellion in Fairview" (VII), "Tackling the Midgard Snake" (IX). Each sketch states (rather mechanically as far as the structure is concerned) a specific problem and then specific solutions designed to keep the farmers in the Garden.

In Chapter I, "Retiring from Fairview," Abner Dunham explains why some of his neighbors left the farm for the city. For example, Herman Lutz's two sons left because their father was too miserly, in that he did not allow them to have their own bank account; and after his boys left, Herman also retired. The problem--of the breaking up of the family--is further explained by the fact that Herman simply did not get along with hired men, "hobo help" (p. 12), who by definition were too unsettled to care for the Garden as it was meant to be cared for. Herman also failed to provide his wife with the comfortable modern home which she



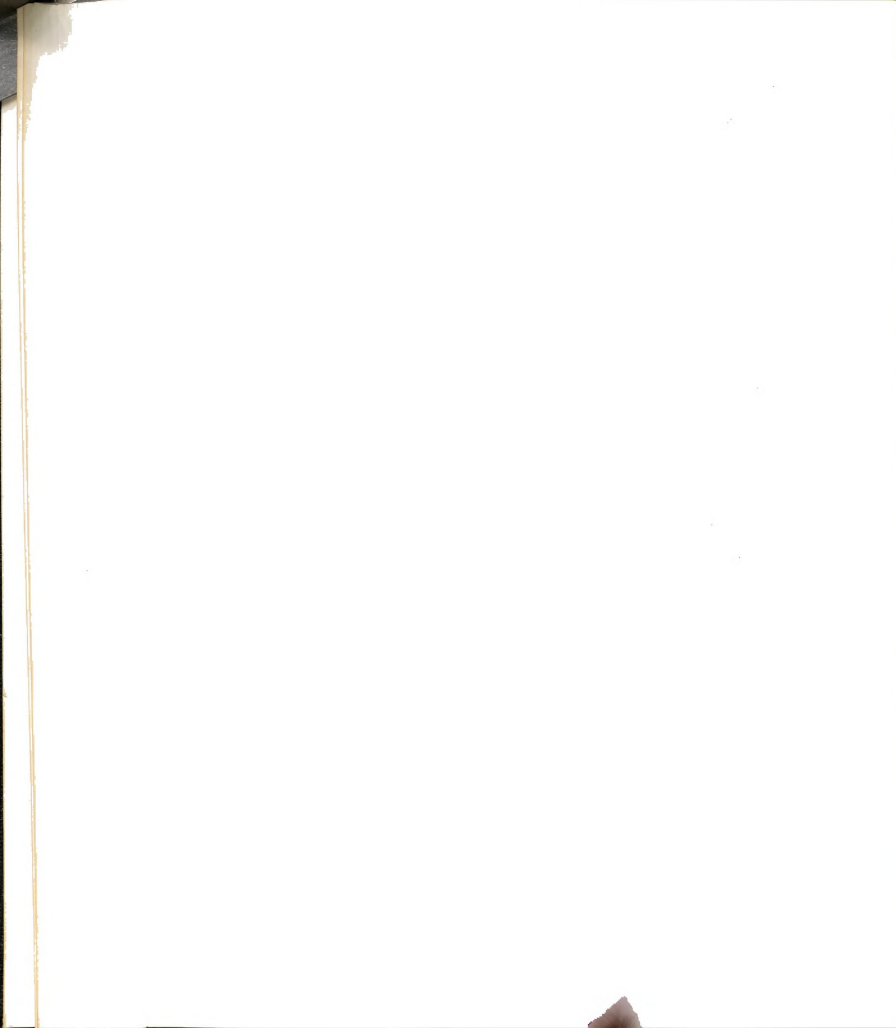
desired, and so she did not even try to persuade him to stay on the farm. The solution to these related problems is that the family must stay together at almost any cost. Another example of a retired farmer is John Ackerman, who, like Lutz, moved to the city because his sons would not carry on his good work in the country. Ackerman's principal mistake was that he did not encourage his boys to become full-fledged farmers; he did not talk with them about farming; although he himself was a success at farming, he "let the children's imaginations get away from it":

The trouble with the Ackerman boys was that they saw only the details, and a good many of the details and daily jobs are not very thrilling, and some of them are dirty. Working day by day without a big idea behind you gets monotonous, and that was the trouble with those boys (pp. 17-18).

The solution to this problem is the encouragement of the farmer's children to see the "glamour," or the "romance," of farming (p. 18).

Also in Chapter I, Abner-Quick gives an explanation of what happens to the farmer who moves to the city. First the old farmer tries, unsuccessfully and pathetically, to "countrify" (p. 20) his small and cramped lot and house (by bringing farm implements and even animals to the unnatural environment), and then, all too soon thereafter, he suffers a greater and more significant penalty:

Old farmers seldom do well physically in town. When the Livermore family left their farm and went to town they had an old cattle dog named Shep which they couldn't bear to leave behind. He had been a dog worth fifty dollars of any man's money on a stock farm, and was as active and industrious a dog



as I ever saw. He lived about eight months in town --died of changed environment. I have observed that the old farmers who 'retired' first when the retiring fever struck the country are mostly dead or in bad health. They have gone the way of Livermore's Shep. I wish we had statistics on this; but Uncle Henry Wallace once said that in his opinion retired farmers live on the average about four years after they strike the pavements (pp. 21-22).

In other words, the twentieth-century American farmer who retires may well expect the same death penalty that has been associated with the removal of the archetypal farmer, Adam, from the Garden of Eden.

In Chapter II, "A Corn-Belt Pioneer--1918 Model," Abner-Quick treats the problem of the decay of the rural church. The reasons for this decay were that the contemporary ministers did not have the "pioneer spirit of getting acquainted" with their neighbors, did not care to travel the hazardous country roads to visit an individual farm family (on a "retail" basis) when they "could serve the Lord by wholesale in towns" (p. 35), and that it was practically impossible to provide a separate church building for each of the various denominations in the country. One solution to this problem is illustrated by the arrival in Fairview of Frank Wiggins, the ministerial pioneer of 1918, who, together with his wife (Daisy), goes about the countryside spreading a general good cheer and warmth, and boosting the morale of his neighbors by showing them that somebody cares. Like Jim Irwin of The Brown Mouse, Frank Wiggins learns all he can about his neighbors, their problems and dreams, so that he can talk with them on a common ground of interest

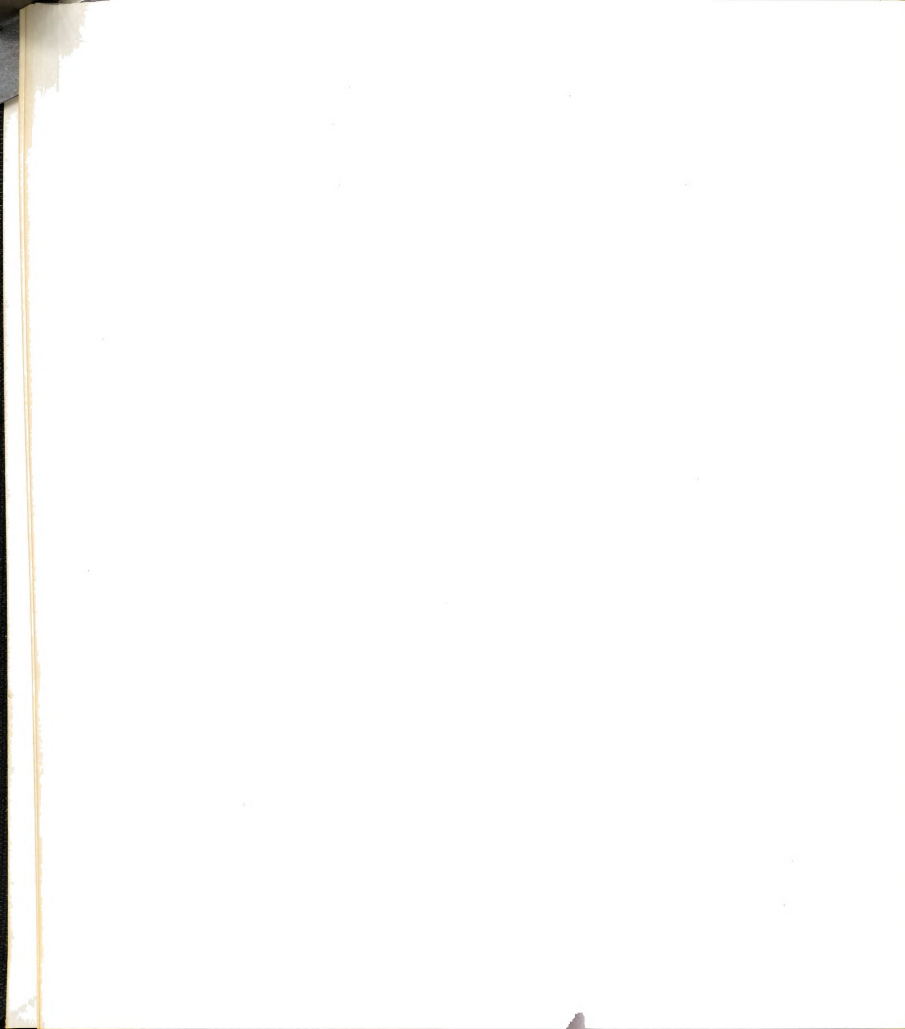


and ultimately help them. For the farm boys, Wiggins promises to make his church "'as interesting as baseball'" (p. 43), which they appreciate even more after Wiggins teaches them some pointers of the game. Because Wiggins' church is open to all denominations and no specific creed is insisted upon or even mentioned, it gains the financial support of the farmers.

But an even better answer to the lack of a general spirit of togetherness in rural life is the school, because the school is automatically supported by taxation and does not have to depend upon the personal diplomacy of a Frank Wiggins. The rural school problem is the subject of Chapter III, "The Boys' Revolt in Fairview," where Quick repeats the thesis of The Brown Mouse. The boys run away (psychically and then physically) from their Edenic homes because they simply do not realize how enjoyable the occupation of farming can be, because they grow bored with the traditional school lessons, and because they desire "adventure and money of their own" (p. 79). The key solution is the "new kind of rural school," which is as romantic as it is pragmatic.

In Chapter IV Abner-Quick states his position concerning the man who learns to farm by first reading books on the subject and then putting the theories into practice. Jeff Sharpe is the illustration of this sort of farmer. At first, everybody in Fairview

. . . laughed at his farming. We saw his blunders, which were obvious and expensive. We saw fields knobby with clods because he had plowed when it was



too wet. We saw great corn-fields made hard to cultivate because of the failure of some new tool which was tried on a big scale instead of a small one. We saw stacks built to carry the rains in instead of out. We saw corn-fields half tended because he tried to do too much with the force of men he had . . . (p. 104).

Then, as Jeff's farming gradually improves and starts paying dividends, the laughing stops and the learning begins. For example, Jeff "got this theory of the keeping up of soil fertility out of his books. It was a new thing in the Corn Belt--but we've all learned it since" (p. 105). Jeff is credited for being

. . . the first man to inoculate soil for alfalfa in our part of the country--that was the soil shipment. I myself lived to pay him two dollars a load for soil from that same field when I saw the sort of crop alfalfa is--and nobody laughed at me. He was the first man to act on the scientific fact that leguminous crops must have certain bacteria on their roots, and he shipped that earth to get the bacteria. . . . Jeff was the first man to treat his seed grains for smut--and after about ten years, during which he had oats by the carload every year without a trace of smut in them, we gradually woke up to the fact that . . . [he] knew something we didn't (pp. 105-106).

In broader terms, theoretical agriculture can play an important role in accomplishing the ultimate goal of recapturing and maintaining America's Eden.

Chapter V is about the positive contributions of "Fairview's New Hired Man," Tom Whelpley. Having been trained by the state college of agriculture, Tom, upon his arrival in Fairview, goes about doing "demonstration work" (p. 123) and giving the old farmers new ideas (much in the manner of Jeff Sharpe). Finally, Tom is deemed more useful as the district school master, in which elected capacity he



consolidates various surrounding rural schools and proceeds to put into effect the same program as Jim Irwin's in The Brown Mouse. (Quick evidently believed that it was better to be repetitious and clear rather than brief and possibly vague.)

Near the beginning of Chapter VI, "An Adventure in Backtothelandia," the narrator says,

We pride ourselves on having the answer to almost any rural-life problem. By two problems, however, we are frankly stumped. One of these is the increasing price of land which is making it harder and harder all the time for any one to start in farming. The other is the back-to-the-lander (p. 147).

Unlike those who, with "bumptious optimism," were "sent out by Horace Greeley's 'Go west, young man,'" the contemporary "back-to-the-landers"

. . . now come with false science. They are the boys who have read that when the sides of Mother Earth are tickled with a hoe she breaks out into a regular ha-ha of harvest . . . (p. 147).

Admitting that "guessing the true route to Backtothelandia," "the sociological Northwest Passage," is the "Great American Riddle," Abner suggests that the "city people should stay in the cities, and the country people on the farms, where they both know what to do" (p. 158). However, for those city people who are truly determined to return to rural riches, there is a sensible way:

'Hire out as a farm hand at twenty-five dollars a month' [advises Abner]. If you want to be a dairyman, hire out on a dairy farm. Leave the eight hundred dollars in the bank, and put twenty-five more with it every month. Learn the habits, tricks, and the language of cows. Learn to milk, keep a score sheet, and do individual feeding with a balanced



ration. . . . Learn on other people's cows, other people's feeds, other people's capital. Make the dairy business pay you for learning it. Play safe, young man, play safe. The only way to do this is to go to work at the farming business at the bottom as a hired man. Every back-to-the-lander ought to be obliged by law to do it. It would make intelligent and interested hired men more plentiful for us farmers, and it would save a lot of fools from making themselves ridiculous and going broke' (pp. 156-157).

Another way is for the serious "back-to-the-lander" to set up an experimental "miniature farm" on any vacant lots he may find in town; then, if that proves successful, he may make the big move to the greater reality of the countryside (p. 164).

Chapter VII, "Sex Rebellion in Fairview," deals with what women most desire in the would-be Eden of contemporary America. It should be said at once that this "sex rebellion" does not have anything to do with an initiatory biological experience, as it does in the Genesis version of the myth. Rather, the rebellion is that of the rural (and married) feminist, who desires a modern home and conveniences to help her do her work, which is important to the total success of farm economy. Yet, even here, Quick uses the old myth, in a story which may be summarized as follows.

A young Fairview farmer, Charlie Henderson, is successfully tempted by a city-slicker-swindler named Mr. De Haven ("and his beautiful wife"), not into biting an apple, but into buying some useless agricultural implements (e.g., a "Never-Work Horse Rake"). In consequence, Charlie suffers not a terrible bellyache but a "blushing"



embarrassment that is surpassed only by the fear of losing his farm. He does lose, temporarily, control of it; his only way of preventing a possibly irrevocable loss is through some legal technicalities which are not of concern here but which, in effect, give his wife, Emmie, sole legal ownership of the farm and reduce poor Charlie to the mere status of a hired hand. It is from her superior legal position that Emmie makes good her "rebellious" demands.

Emmie is as specific as she is enthusiastic about these demands. Fulfilled, they define her paradise: "'Bathroom!' burst out Emmie Henderson. 'My idea of heaven is a place filled with pretty children, and bathtubs of soft water--hot and cold . . .'" (p. 189). She intends

' . . . to make the house and the woman's side of the farm as convenient as the barn, and the man's field of work. This means some central lighting system to relieve me of the disgusting and never-ending task of filling, cleaning and lighting kerosene lamps. It means a central heating system which will take off my hands the barbarous labor of shoveling soft coal into sooty stoves and keeping my mind on what fires we have when the men are out of the house in cold weather, and which will heat the house evenly all over, and thus rid us of the draughts and physically shocking changes of temperature in winter caused by the fact that only a portion of the house is heated at all. It means some arrangement for saving me the choice of hanging out my clothes on an outdoor line at the risk of my life in bad weather, or making the house unfit to live in by putting them up in the rooms. It means a modern kitchen, with a dish-washing contrivance of some kind, and water always hot to use in it, a good kitchen cabinet, a refrigerator with ice always on hand, a gasoline or oil range, fireless cooker and a linoleum floor. It means a thoroughly sanitary modern bathroom. It means a mangle for the clothes, and a washing-machine--both run by motors of some sort. It means the removal of the milk and cream from the



house, and it means milking machinery--the whole thing to be run by the men. It means a house fit to live in!' (pp. 191-192).

Charlie listens with helpless "horror" to these demands of Emmie, who is the "new farm wife."⁷

Despite her husband's fall brought about by Satanic agents (the De Havens), and ironically because of it, Emmie will proceed to deal with Satan himself, if necessary, in order to gain her heaven:

'I'd like,' said Emmie, 'to have a definite proposition from Satan to give me for my soul running water, hot and cold, in my kitchen--or to mortgage a few years of my life for it' (p. 189).

Happily spared the high and incongruous Faustian price, Emmie soon celebrates the "fifth anniversary" of Charlie's paradoxical deal with the "seductive Mr. and Mrs. De Haven," which meant for her the "foundation" of the true Eden, by giving to Charlie, in their remodeled home, "the deeds and bills of sale which legally wiped out the whole De Haven episode" (p. 198). The Hendersons can then live happily ever after; and Quick's main point in this story is that, although some price must be paid, some sort of Satanic pests or problems dealt with, Eden can be created in America's Corn Belt.

The problem in Chapter VIII, "The Fairview Girl Crop," is that the girls unfortunately leave the country to seek romance and excitement, mates, and art in the city.

⁷Quick made the same case in a strictly nonfictional form in his "The New Farm Wife: Who She Is and What She Will Demand Before She Will Stay Put," The Ladies' Home Journal (April, 1919), pp. 41, 82-83.



The solution is to have "socials in the schoolhouse," where "'nice dances, . . . a musical programme, or maybe a lecture or a picture show'" would assist the mating process (pp. 215, 214). Moreover, as Abner explains,

. . . it would be better for our rural life if we made more of their [the girls'] weddings, their preparations for mating, the greatest thing of their lives. . . . It has been a distinct loss to our American country life, this long abandonment of ceremony and observance. We must build it up again (pp. 223-224).

Furthermore, there should be a "new art"--not only for the girls' but the whole community's benefit--" an art growing out of life" (p. 218), an art of the farmers, by the farmers, and for the farmers. When Daisy (Abner's niece) mentions an example of this new and pragmatic art, "'a Minnesota play, called Back to the Farm,'" Kate (a girl who had been drawn by the city-magnet) asks, "'What's it about?'"

'About the life you ran away from, and how to make it better,' answered Daisy. 'Cecil Baker, a North Dakota farm boy, has written A Bee in a Drone's Hive--that's the retired farmer play; and The New Liberator is another rural play of the North Dakota school, dealing with the marketing problem--I don't know who wrote that. The rural credit question is presented in a North Dakota drama entitled, The Prairie Wolf. The people of the farming districts are crazy about them, because they know what they are about.'

'Gammer Gurton's Needle,' said Frank, 'and Ralph Roister Doister over again.'

'And Marlowe and Shakespeare over again, too, perhaps,' said Daisy. 'When thirty million people whose expression of their own life has been suppressed for centuries start expressing themselves nobody can tell what great things may come of it--if they can only escape the blight of New York!' (p. 219).

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written by a farm girl, which sums up the solutions to various related problems in contemporary American life: "The Glory of the Soil, which deals with the redemptive power of the love of nature" (p. 226).

Chapter IX, "Tackling the Midgard Anake," deals with the problem of "the landlord, the tenant, the public, and the land itself" (p. 245). The problem is that the short-term (usually one-year) tenants and their landlords are in a "criminal conspiracy . . . to rob the land" of its fertility, hence posterity's use of it (p. 242). Although the problem may seem complex, the central solution is quite simple: the tenant should be encouraged to maintain and even improve the fertility of the soil; if the landlord wants him off the land, then the landlord should pay him for the yet-to-be-used fertility; since the payment for this fertility right would be expensive for the landlord, the tenant, in all likelihood, would stay put on the soil he has properly cultivated and calls his home. As Abner says,

Furthermore, I don't like laboring to build up a socialized community in Fairview and have it all shot to rags every spring by the moving in and moving out of tenant farmers. I want them to stay until we can build them solidly into the neighborhood like good concrete (p. 256).

To clarify the importance of the landlord-tenant aspect of the ideal neighborhood, Quick used, in Chapter IX, a Norse myth, as well as the Hebrew mythology used in previous chapters. The "Midgard Snake" is explained by Adolph Tulp (a German immigrant in Fairview):

'Vunce the god Thor vass out fishing, and caught somedings on his hook dat made earthquakes and volcanoes ven he tried to pull it out. He had hooked the Midgard Snake vich iss wrapped round and round the whole earth, and vich, ven id iss landed, lands the planet with it. Ven ve take hold of the land kvestion ve haf hooked the Midgard Snake. No vunder it makes a disturbance. It iss the kvestion of all kvestions. Ven it iss settled, all iss settled' (p. 252).

Yet the Hebrew parallels dominate; Fairview is "God's garden" (p. 249), and the landlord-tenant problem is the serpent that must be properly dealt with if the Garden of Eden is to be realized, or not lost. Abner allows another Fairview neighbor to quote not a Norse myth but Moses:

'All systems of religion recognize, as did the religion of Moses, that the land is not like other objects, a thing which can properly be held in unlimited ownership. "The land shall not be sold forever," said our religion in its earliest days, "for the land is mine, saith the Lord." The landlord's interests must be first those of the community, and second those of a taker of rent' (p. 254).

Abner also refers to Moses:

. . . if Moses found it necessary to give back the land every fifty years to the families that originally owned it, I don't think a man can be called a wild-eyed fanatic if he looks our land system over and sees what can be done to prevent all the land from going into the hands of those who never work land, and all the work of farming to those who never own land (pp. 255-256).

And in his finale, Abner-Quick waxes as lyrical as some

Biblical prophet:

It is a question for you, oh, ye millions of town-dwellers who own so many of the farms of America, to say what you will do to save the land in its richness, to save the nation in its integrity, to save our returning soldiers, to save the nation from you yourselves! (pp. 256-257).

The last sketch, "Uncle Sam in Fairview," is about "Uncle Sam's farming missionary, the county agent" (p. 258). The only problem here is that many American farmers may not have heard about the good such missionaries can do. The solution is to propagandize his worth. The agent in Fairview, Freeman Clay, maintains an office full of the latest bulletins on agricultural techniques, and he goes about the county working with and for the farmers, benevolently correcting their "ignorance," demonstrating the techniques, often freeing them from potential curses of the soil. Unlike some serpentine city-slicker-swindler (e.g., De Haven), Freeman would never dream of seducing the Fairview farmers into buying useless farm implements; he does not operate on a personal profit-motive basis, for his salary is paid by taxes, federal and county. Quick propagandizes that the county should be more than happy to pay its share to support a Freeman Clay, because he does--or can do--more than his part in making an Eden in twentieth-century America.

Before leaving The Fairview Idea, and going on to discuss We Have Changed All That, one should note that Quick's quest for form in 1919--his wavering between fiction and nonfiction--is evident not only in the larger units of composition but in the diction as well. Quick was painfully conscious of his contemporary audience's reception of certain key words; for example, he said in his nonfictional preface to The Fairview Idea:

When a New Yorker or a Chicagoan, or one of the citizens of any town or city in the United States,

wishes to subject his fellows to the soft impeachment of lack of smartness or intelligence, he is quite likely to call him a farmer. This is a pleasantry; but it follows a tendency which inheres in the language as is shown by the words 'boor,' which meant 'farmer' before it meant cad; . . . 'villain,' who was once a man who belonged to a farm or villa, but now is any bad man; 'yokel,' once a farmer, but now a 'hick'; 'pagan,' from 'paganus,' a countryman; 'heathen,' a dweller among the heaths. To call a man on Forty-second Street a farmer is a soft impeachment, now; but if farm life is not ameliorated it may sometime become an actionable epithet, like 'villain' (pp. vii-viii).

And although throughout this semifictional book Abner-Quick propagandizes a "socialized community," an Eden with various co-op programs and attitudes, he is nevertheless disturbed by the word socialism itself:

We are not a socialistic community. . . . it makes us rather furious to be accused of Socialism or anything that sounds like it. . . .

Just another word on this accusation . . . : As a matter of fact, what have we been doing? We have been applying the old New England public school and town meeting idea to our present-day life. We brought the best of New England to the Corn Belt in prairie schooners before the great Civil War. We've got the old machine on our hands. Is it socialistic to repair it? (pp. 120-121).

And again:

We people of the Fairview District are sometimes accused of conceit on account of the so-called socialization of our neighborhood. I claim that there is no such thing as a taint of Socialism in it. My contention is that we have carried right through to its logical conclusion, on a few lines, the sort of thing which my New England ancestors laid the foundation for in the free school and the town meeting (p. 146).

The reason for this protestation against socialism is made clear in We Have Changed All That.

As We Have Changed All That shows, Quick, together

with his contemporary Americans, was apprehensive about socialism because of its association with the revolution and chaos in Russia that grew immediately out of World War I. The words socialism, communism, and Bolshevism were loosely synonymous in the American mind at this time, and Quick reflected this feeling that grew into the Big Red Scares of the 1920's and later. Quick gave early examples of this--not only in The Fairview Idea, and again in a notable nonfictional book published the same year, From War to Peace (1919), but also in We Have Changed All That.

Since We Have Changed All That is Quick's only work of fiction that has a non-American, Russian, setting, and since Quick was a co-author of this short novel, the circumstances leading to its composition should be explained. From 1916 to 1919 Quick was a member of the Federal Farm Loan Bureau, directing thousands of tax dollars into agrarian communities and commuting between his city-office in the Treasury Building in Washington, D. C., and his farm-home called Coolfont near Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, where he wrote most of his nonfictional and semi-fictional propaganda in behalf of the American farmer.⁸ Because of failing health and the wish to write something worthier of the name literature, Quick resigned from the

⁸On Quick's life at Coolfont, see my "The House that Quick Built," in a forthcoming edition of Valleys of History (Hagerstown, Maryland).

Bureau in 1919.⁹ But President Wilson asked him to perform one final service for his country: the direction of the liquidation of the affairs of the American Red Cross in Siberia. Quick was certified as a Lt. Colonel and dispatched by President Wilson to Vladivostok, where he stayed from March to July, 1920, helping the Red Cross during the withdrawal of American armed forces. Although this task brought on a nearly fatal hemorrhage and ruined his health, Quick was determined to keep his promise to a young noblewoman, whom he met in Russia.

Quick met Elena Stepanoff MacMahon in Vladivostok, whence she had fled, by way of the Trans-Siberian Railway, from Kazan, where her aristocratic (though untitled) family had been dispossessed of their property and threatened of their lives by the Bolsheviki. Elena became a living symbol to Quick of the victims of the villainous Bolsheviki, and he not only listened to her story with great sympathetic interest but also promised to help her write it when they both arrived in the United States. They came back on the same army transport, the Madawaska, Quick in very ill health and Elena with her husband, an officer named MacMahon of the American army engineers she had met near Vladivostok.

Quick never again saw the MacMahons, who took up residence in Chicago, but he corresponded with them about

⁹Moreover, Quick was justly satisfied that he had done all that could reasonably be expected in establishing the Bureau and its function; see letter of Herbert Quick to Woodrow Wilson, June 19, 1919, in the Quick Papers.

the book he had promised to help her write. Quick fulfilled this promise in 1921, but the book did not appear until 1928, when it was released under the co-authors' names and under the title furnished by the publisher, We Have Changed All That (Bobbs-Merrill).

The storyline of Quick's Russian novelette is a simple and clear one, based upon the flight experiences of Elena Stepanoff, who in the fiction is called Musia Krassin. Most of the story takes place in the city of Kazan and in the "House of Krassin," where Mrs. Krassin, her daughter Musia, and her son Loris illustrate the mingled emotions of pride, courage and fear in the face of the rudely intruding Bolsheviki. As the story develops, the resisting Loris is tracked down, despite the mother-hen precautions of Mrs. Krassin, and executed on the orders of a Bolshevik leader who at the same time has a romantic attraction to Musia. Musia finally flees all the chaos to Siberia. Quick's anti-Bolshevik theme is likewise clear: these villains were cruelly breaking up families and wantonly destroying a civilized, cultured way of life that it had taken centuries to build.

Elena Stepanoff contributed the story, but it was Quick who put it down on paper, and the published version is filled with noticeable quirks of Quick's style. For example, the description of the invasion of Mrs. Krassin's great house by the "terrible squad of armed men" dressed in peasant smocks:

This peasant's smock--he wished that he could somehow make her understand that he had never worn it until liberty came to Russia in the dictatorship of the proletariat. He was confused and exasperated. Just as she had hoped he would be. So he turned from the door . . . just as, with held breath, she had hoped he would do; and he entered the room across the hall. . . .

She almost fluttered in before him, much as a hen-pheasant flutters away from the dearly-guarded secret of her nest.

The squad paused outside. The man in the peasant's smock entered--entered the luxurious boudoir of a lady! (p. 18).

The phrase "just as she . . . " and the sort of reserve and reverse confidence idea behind it was one of Quick's favorites; he titled a whole chapter in Vandemark's Folly "Just as Grandma Thorndyke Expected." The "hen-pheasant" image suggests more of Quick's Iowa than Russia somehow, and the use in the third paragraph quoted of a shock effect for Puritan-Victorian minded audiences is typical of Quick. His use of explicit moralizing (a style he never completely avoided) is in abundance in this short book, particularly in the last chapter, the last paragraph of which is as follows:

Fate had struck that family down in ruins; but that was the usual thing in Russia. Over all the former Empire it was the same. The people of the Krassin type had met their doom; and now the wave which had overwhelmed them was rising to engulf every mind, whether that of an aristocrat or not, which could not accept the ready-made, the daily-altered formulae of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. With which dictatorship, the proletariat had as little to do as the Krassins and their fellows. To all, save to the few maniacs who had overcome their keepers and assumed rulership, had come the same fate: desolation, disillusionment, dissolution, and the supreme trial of souls (pp. 262-263).

But for all Quick's intent to depict chaos and dissolution, and notwithstanding the book's undeniable importance as an early example of American reaction to the Russian revolution, We Have Changed All That is not as effective or graphic in its style as, say, John Reed's Ten Days That Shook the World.

Quick had wanted his (and Mrs. MacMahon's) book titled, among other possibilities, A Dissolving View of Chaos, and he had wanted it published right away when the manuscript was finished in 1921. But his publishers wanted the work expanded so as to be more fitting to a Russian story, to suggest the vastness of Russia. But this Quick would or could not do, for, as he said in a letter to Hewitt Hanson Howland, of Bobbs-Merrill, on September 6, 1921:

I am afraid the expansion of the Russian story is out of the question. In the first place, I am not in favor of it from a purely artistic viewpoint. The story is told. In the next place I have no idea how to do it, which is another way of saying the same thing. In the third place, I cannot possibly do it for this fall, even if the way lay open before me. In the next place my co-author is against it, though she does not say she will not go to work [sic] at it. Again, if it were published, 'twere well it were published quickly, for now it has the field to itself in the way of being an inside study of the conditions from the inside. Mrs. McMahon says in a letter 'I don't think the expanding of the story would be for its benefit. There is nothing worse than a book which says too much.' By this I take it she means that tries to say more than its legitimate content. She instances Tolstoi's 'Cossacks', which is about the length of our story, and she thinks is a better work than Anna Karenina.¹⁰

¹⁰In the Bobbs Papers.

When 1922 came Quick himself wanted the publication of his Russian story delayed; as his publishers put it in their 1928 preface-note to We Have Changed All That:

With Mr. Quick We Have Changed All That was an interlude in the midst of writing his epic of the Iowa soil; the three novels, Vandemark's Folly, The Hawkeye, and The Invisible Woman, and the personal record of his early years, One Man's Life. He was unwilling to have its continuity of impression broken by the publication of a thing so different as this Russian story . . . (p. viii).

The "three novels" named will be discussed in the following chapter, but first some generalizations are to be drawn concerning the books analyzed in the present chapter. These generalizations, in addition to those drawn in previous chapters, shed light on Quick's "epic" novels, the Midland Trilogy.

The books that Quick wrote from 1909 to 1921, with the exception of his best fictional work of this period and one of the best he ever wrote, Yellowstone Nights, were heavily propagandistic and dealt with contemporary problems. The central problem--from which all others seemed to radiate--was the rapid urbanization of America. The main solution was to boost the morale of the farmers, to encourage them to conserve or recapture, through peaceful means, the innocent, healthy, and cooperative if not "socialistic" life next to God's nature. Yellowstone Nights is a fictional representation of a pilgrimage to the God-Given and government-owned virgin land. The Brown Mouse and The Fairview Idea are semifictional works that pointed the constructive and peaceful ways to the Garden of Eden

in twentieth-century America. We Have Changed All That is a propagandistic novelette that expressed Quick's shock over destructive, revolutionary change.

Quick was repetitiously clear that the only proper place for his Adamic hero, who appeared in his pre-1909 books as well as afterward, was next to God-given nature, not in the man-made city; that the legitimate, moral and meaningful occupation for this American Adam was nothing but farming; and that the best social belief was a benevolent collectivism, not a greedy individualism based on the rather capitalistic idea of the survival of the fittest. By 1921 Quick had clarified these ideas, which define his conception of the true American identity, but in doing so he had moved away from the fictional form. This was unfortunate because Quick preferred writing fiction, rather than nonfiction or semifiction.

During the chaotic days of World War I and its immediate aftermath, Quick was "deeply disturbed."¹¹ Events, he said in the preface to his nonfictional From War to Peace (1919), had been "moving with bewildering rapidity" (p. i). It was becoming increasingly difficult for him to preach the ways to the contemporary Garden: the problem of form and diction was becoming too much for him to handle effectively. However, it is to be emphasized that in the 1909-1921 period Quick did succeed in

¹¹Personal interview with Mrs. Raymond N. Ball (Herbert Quick's daughter) in Rochester, New York, April 6, 1966.

locating and clarifying one of the major subjects that would help him write a fictional work better than any he had written before, with the possible exception of Yellowstone Nights. This major subject was agriculture and its natural association with the myth of the Garden of Eden.

In addition, what Quick needed in order to write a better fiction was a reconsideration of his past. The past would help him to re-establish his own personal identity with American culture and also to trace the origins of why that identity had become increasingly problematic during the twentieth century. The past would give him perspective, and it would allow him full use of the Adamic myth. Quick's return to the past was a full-fledged return to the fictional form he preferred--but this is the concern of the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RETURN TO THE PAST: THE MIDLAND TRILOGY, 1921-1924

This study has now come to the work which the reviewers of Quick's own day unanimously called his best fiction. Although the present chapter proposes to take up each of the three novels separately, first the circumstances and motives of the composition of the entire Trilogy should be made clear, because they help to illuminate the work; and a few generalizations should be suggested in advance of those which will appear during the course of each of the three detailed analyses and those which will appear at the end of the chapter.

As pointed out at the end of the last chapter, what Quick needed (in addition to a non-urbanized setting) to write better fiction was the past. He needed the perspective and stability which the past provided in order to present the American identity which he saw jeopardized by the growing chaos of the twentieth century. He had not looked to the past as a source for literature since writing his children's book, In the Fairyland of America (1901), which was dedicated to his mother because it was she who had first led his steps into the land of wondrous fable; now, two decades later, he was returning to it.

Actually, Quick had talked about writing his Mid-land Trilogy since one day in 1906, when he casually outlined his "epic" story to Ralph Hale in the park in Indianapolis.¹ But something had always interfered. If it was not the "squirrel track" of government work, then it was one of his propagandistic writings; in a typical letter, he described some of the distractions, though they were important activities in their own right, to Hewitt Hanson Howland (of Bobbs-Merrill):

Dear Hewitt:

I will send you the MS of the Fairview Idea just as soon as I can get it looked over. It is here waiting attention, but this is a big job on which I am engaged now and the matter of getting a little time off is difficult. I have just returned for instance from St. Paul, where I have installed the St. Paul land bank, which will do within a short time probably a hundred million dollars of business in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota, and brought the president of that bank back with me to a conference of the twelve presidents of the banks, at which a farm loan campaign covering the entire country will be mapped out.

I realize fully what you say as to the difficulty of keeping a book like "The Broken Lance" in print. . . . I am convinced that the next work I do will be, compared to what I have done, monumental. . . . The trilogy of which we have talked is growing on me all the time and taking form in my mind. All I need to do now is to put it on paper. . . .²

Quick had mentioned his "three novels" to Howland at least

¹Letter of H. Quick to W. C. Bobbs, February 26, 1921; letter of H. Quick to H. H. Howland, December 22, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

²H. Quick to H. H. Howland, March 15, 1917, in the Bobbs Papers.

as early as 1916³; and by 1919 he seemed determined to rid himself of distractions, even to the point of a ritualistic burning of the present:

Dear Hewitt:

This is to inform you that having resigned my position as a member of the Federal Farm Loan Board my address is henceforth Berkeley Springs. Henry Cabot Lodge, whom his evil genius has struck senile or something, gives his occupation in the Congressional as 'that of a writer'. In this alone I am at one with him. I am henceforth a writer. . . .

It's cool here in the mountains, and when I get my packages unpacked and the bulk of what my secretary sent up burned, I think I shall be able to do some real work. . . . 4

Although two weeks later in 1919 he concluded a long letter, largely on his anti-Bolshevism, with the comment "Yes, I expect to work on my novel again now--if after three years I can take it up successfully,"⁵ Quick was usually very optimistic about his chances at this time to put his long-planned work on paper. Even after the trip to Russia that ruined his health, he was confident that he could still manage to write his novels.

In addition, Quick felt that he was uniquely qualified to tell the story of the American Midwest of the 1850's through 1890's:

³H. Quick to H. H. Howland, January 17, 1916, in the Bobbs Papers.

⁴H. Quick to H. H. Howland, August 4, 1919, in the Bobbs Papers.

⁵H. Quick to H. H. Howland, August 20, 1919, in the Bobbs Papers.

I lived this life, and am the only writing man who did. Garland [sic] did not live it, nor did Hough, though the former was born in Wisconsin, and the latter in Illinois. I was of the thing, as they were not.⁶

And he emphasized the biographical and autobiographical nature of the Trilogy:

The story I have finished [Vandemark's Folly] is a mingling of the life of my father, of my wife's father, of our relatives, and neighbors. The second will be in some measure my own history and experiences.⁷

Quick's intention to write a personal as well as a cultural history suggests that by 1921 the American identity, in his view, was in so much danger of being lost that he could no longer deny an attempt to re-define it and also re-establish his relationship to it.

Quick made this attempt in the three novels which were ultimately entitled Vandemark's Folly (1922), The Hawkeye (1923), and The Invisible Woman (1924). He made it clear that each of these novels was to be a self-contained story and that all three were intended as a single work; Vandemark's Folly, he said,

. . . is the first of three novels which will cover the history of Iowa from its early settlement to recent times. . . .

I have tried to make the story sufficient in itself, and not dependent on its continuation for its interest. . . . I think it a good story. But in it I have prepared the way for the stories which will follow. The three will constitute a single work,

⁶H. Quick to W. C. Bobbs, February 26, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

⁷H. Quick to W. C. Bobbs, February 26, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

and will be the story of Iowa, and of the whole Middle West. It will be a sort of prose epic of the greatest thing in history of its kind.⁸

His goal was to arrange his memorable past into a coherent unity, to capture the "really true" of what can only be called the penetralia of his biography in the net of a cultural fiction that had "the lost prairie of Iowa in it."⁹

The overall design of the Midland Trilogy emphasizes growth and the consequences of that growth. It depicts the growth of the virgin land as it is impregnated by various pioneers and as each succeeding novel has a larger and larger framework setting. The setting of the first novel in the series is a township; the second, a county; and the third, a state. Quick originally wanted the novels titled so as to suggest this growth:

You see 'Vandemark Township' is related to two books which are to follow. The next will be 'Monterey County' and the last 'Iowa'. They will make up one story.¹⁰

In addition to this progressive enlargement of the societal setting, the Midland Trilogy illustrates important stages in the growth of the individual hero (or heroine). First, there is "Cow" Vandemark, who represents the essence of adolescence; second, Freemont McConkey, who represents the meaning of the emergence of maturity; last, Christina

⁸H. Quick to W. C. Bobbs, February 26, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

⁹H. Quick to W. C. Bobbs, February 26, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

¹⁰H. Quick to H. H. Howland, April 26, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

Thorkelson, who represents the rebirth of innocence.

The relationship between the individual hero and his society, as both grow and develop, is explained by their respective outlooks on the land. The land is the most important symbol shared by the hero and his society, but the land poses a major problem in the Trilogy because as a symbol it does not have universally shared interpretations. One way to state this problem is to ask the question: after the 'virgin land, what? In answering this question, Quick gave, in effect, both a definition of the American identity and an explanation for its being threatened by the coming of the twentieth century. Moreover, in defining the American identity, or what it once was, Quick drew not only upon his own personal history and symbols but also upon the metaphors and mythic elements which are as old as the Bible and as recent as Mark Twain, and which, in 1921-1924, Quick believed were--or should be--still shared by the Americans.

Vandemark's Folly (1922)

The following analysis of Vandemark's Folly treats its facts of publication, its title, the dialogue behind it and in it (such as that between the new and the old, innocence and experience, romanticism and realism), its narrative viewpoint and characterization, its evocation of the past and the virgin land, its structure, its indebtedness to other authors, its use of the land as private symbol and public myth, and, most important, its broad mythic theme

which grows out of these features and transcends them.

This first novel of the Midland Trilogy was initially published in the Ladies' Home Journal in 1921. Although the financial rewards of the serialized version satisfied Quick, he did not like the condensation of his story in the Journal. He looked optimistically forward to the novel's being published in full in book form; and he had faith in treating a subject of the past, despite those critics who disparaged the past as a source for fiction. As he phrased these related thoughts in a letter of acknowledgement to a Bobbs-Merrill reader's response to the Vandemark story:

I was very glad indeed to read the letter of your reader on the manuscript of the novel. I have felt no doubt that the story is a good one, though a reading of a recent number of the Dial makes me wonder whether I know what good literature is. Yet, I have confidence in the story, and the assumption on the part of some critics that old things have passed away and all things have become new does not much disturb me. I have great hopes of this novel. Anyhow, it has already brought me more material rewards than any story I ever wrote, and that comforts me. And I expect still greater returns from it in book form. It really represents something. I am glad that the reader thinks so, too.¹¹

Quick's oft-expressed concern about the novel's title was sometimes a hint also of what he thought critically about the current state of romanticism in literature; in the same letter to Howland as that just quoted from, he said:

¹¹H. Quick to H. H. Howland, April 26, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

Please do not allow the sentiment for a change of the name pervade your organization; for I shall be very difficult to convince on that point. I do not mean that I do not think there is any lack of importance in the name, but I believe the name VANDEMARK TOWNSHIP is exactly the title for this book. In fact I think a catchy, theatrical name would be a weakness. Against such titles as "When Knighthood Was in Flower" let us put such titles as "David Harum" and "Main Street". Both the latter are very quiet and unimpressive; but the books seem to have scored.¹²

Yet Quick allowed the title chosen by the editors of the Ladies' Home Journal to be considered by the Bobbs-Merrill people:

I see by the papers as Mr. Dooley used to say, that the L. H. J. calls my story VANDEMARK'S FOLLY. If this pleases the force better than my own name for it, it may be considered. I have no idea as to whether, the names being equal, carrying the serial name on to the book does good or harm.¹³

The one feature that Quick never liked about the serialized version was its abridgement, because it left "all the guts out of the story."¹⁴ Short, abridged fiction had but rarely been Quick's forte, for his best literary talents were like Theodore Dreiser's, calling for the larger canvas to produce the effects of accumulating images and emotions. His strength was, of course, also his weakness, for even though the unabridged version of, in this case, Vandemark's Folly had the so-called "guts" left in,

¹²H. Quick to H. H. Howland, April 26, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

¹³H. Quick to H. H. Howland, September 1, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

¹⁴H. Quick to H. H. Howland, September 1, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

it was also quite wordy. But, again, the very wordiness or repetition was a method for the free exploration of the various facets of the central theme, a method including the use of suggested nobility, if not "knighthood" terminology, as regards a few of the American pioneers and most definitely including the depiction of a certain type of hero, Vandemark, when he "was in flower."

Quick's story is told in the "autobiographical style" by J. T. Vandemark, a character whose presence is felt in two ways: as an old farmer remembering and telling the story, and as the aspiring adolescent he once was. Quick explained why he chose a first-person narrator:

As Dickens remarks in one of his prefaces, the autobiographical style has its limitations, but if its advantages had not outweighed them he would not have clung to it. Two of the great classics which occur to me are in this style--David Copperfield and Lorna Doone. So also Tristram Shandy, if it can be said to have any definable style at all. And in the way of later popular favorites I remember Joseph Vance and Eben Holden. . . . Robinson Crusoe could not have been the wonder it is in any other style. I think I have the same reason for adopting it that De Foe and Blackmore had--the interpenetration of an environment with a personality.¹⁵

In the same letter to Howland, Quick also wrote:

. . . everything [in the novel] . . . has a reason for existence and has been considered. In the first place the type of man represented in the narrator must be established in the mind of the reader. This is essential, for what is said as well as the manner of saying it is all given color and even substance by his life-long environment and the changes therein. The story is not only a narration of what one man

¹⁵H. Quick to H. H. Howland, December 5, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

saw taking place, but of what he did not see, and of his thoughts and his philosophy.¹⁶

One cannot help but wonder what the "limitations" of this autobiographical style were, since Quick set few if any limits on what his narrator could know. In any event, if for no other reason than the autobiographical style, the character of the narrator--like those to whom Quick acknowledged an indebtedness--commands a central interest.

The story's "Introduction" is double, but this was not entirely Quick's doing. He had originally written a one-paragraph introduction followed by the first sentence --"My name is Jacobus Teunis Vandemark"--of the story proper. That first paragraph, to which his publishers objected, was (and is) as follows:

The work of writing the history of this township--I mean Vandemark Township, Monterey County, State of Iowa--has been turned over to me. I have been asked to do this I guess because I was the first settler in the township; it was named after me; I live on my own farm--the oldest farm operated by the original settler in this part of the country; I know the history of these thirty-six square miles of land and also of the wonderful swarming of peoples which made the prairies over; and the agent of the Excelsior County History Company of Chicago, having heard of me as an authority on local history, has asked me to write this part of their new History of Monterey County for which they are now canvassing for subscribers. I can never write this as it ought to be written, and for an old farmer with no learning to try to do it may seem imprudent, but sometimes a great genius may come up who will put on paper the strange and splendid story of Iowa, of Monterey County, and of Vandemark Township; and when he does write this, the greatest history ever

¹⁶H. Quick to H. H. Howland, December 5, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

written, he may find such adventures as mine of some use to him. Those who lived this history are already few in number, are fast passing away and will soon be gone. I lived it, and so did my neighbors and old companions and friends. So here I begin (p. i).

Howland wrote Quick the objections of the Bobbs-Merrill staff:

I think the first line of the second paragraph-- "My name is Jacobus Teunis Vandemark"--a stirring opening. I think the first paragraph unattractive, and really unfortunate inasmuch as it plants in the reader's mind the thought that what he is being asked to read is a county history prepared for the Excelsior County History Company of Chicago, and he well knows what that means. Also, the paragraph is apologetic, the author admitting that he can't do the job as it should be done; this would discourage the reader for he is sure to accept the author's low estimate of his ability. The paragraph ends with: 'So here I begin.' Well, asks the reader-who-must-be-shown, why not begin there, then? I hope most ardently that if you feel the account of how the history came to be written is essential, that you'll put the pieces together and make an introduction of them.¹⁷

Quick was permitted the retention of the initial paragraph, and it is fitting that this was done, for it introduces an important aspect of the character of the narrator that Quick wanted to portray: that of the humble, untutored rural person whose successful adventures in life somehow and really suggest that he is a "genius."

The several paragraphs (nearly four pages) of the "second" introduction, which Quick added in response to Howland's criticism, are also one of the fortunate tactics in the book, for not only is the narrator's old character further revealed and firmly established but also a credible

¹⁷H. H. Howland to H. Quick, November 29, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.

verisimilitude is created for the "history." Here the old narrator reveals that he is still basically a trusting soul but that once his suspicions are aroused--by such "traveling swindlers" (p. ii) as the city-slicker agent for the Excelsior County History Company of Chicago--then he is not to be fooled. No country "hick" or "Jonathan" or "Reuben" he! He would rather consign to the flames the manuscript he has begun than allow his vanity to be capitalized upon.¹⁸ In fact, old Vandemark starts to destroy the manuscript of his past adventures, but his granddaughter Gertrude comes to the rescue and, because of her sincere interest, persuades him to continue writing the story.

Gertrude's presence in the story adds to the verisimilitude. Her role is that of editor. As her grandfather writes the story in his own way, using his own "dialect" terms, she adds explanatory footnotes for the benefit

¹⁸Quick himself had very nearly the same feelings, as he wrote to Howland, September 27, 1921 (in the Bobbs Papers):

As for the novel--Vandemark's Folly-- . . . I thought you were enthusiastic about it. The verdict of your reader was certainly very favorable. It has attracted the attention of editors and publishers. One editor of a great magazine writes me that he got a galley proof of it and read it because he was interested in it--and the galley proofs are poor stuff on account of the condensation. He says, 'Aside from the regret that we did not have this it gave me tremendous pleasure; it's a truly great American novel and I'll be disappointed if it doesn't have a great book sale'. And then he wrote about things he wanted me to do for him.

Now I would not like to have this book published by you unless you have something of the feeling he expressed. In other words, I should want you to feel that the work itself is something well worth while. . . .

of readers who may well be from some other part of the country. The impression is of an old farmer really in the process of creating a manuscript, with the helpful interest of his watchdog-like granddaughter, who sometimes agrees and sometimes disagrees with his choice of expressions. Also, this introductory juxtapositioning of the old Vandemark and the young Gertrude is the first instance of the motif of experience and innocence, of age and youth, running throughout the story. (Another is, of course, that of the old Vandemark and the young one.)

An important example of Gertrude's editorship occurs in the first paragraph of the story proper, where old Vandemark reports her preference for spelling the family name:

She spells the old surname van der Marck--a little y and a little d . . . the first two syllables written like separate words. . . . But she will know better when she gets older and has more judgment (p. 2).

The Dutch van, separated, is (like German von, English sir, and French de) too obvious a sign, or "mark," of the nobility for the taste of the old Vandemark, who says:

The neighbors would never understand it . . . and would think I felt above them. Nothing loses a man his standing among us farmers like putting on style (p. 2).

Old Vandemark will therefore not follow Gertrude's advice to use the nobiliary particle, but the suggestion grows that he is as noble as a knight and was perhaps even more so during the golden days of his youth when he roamed the

virgin prairie and cultivated it and established a veritable family identity with it. This kinship of Vandemark and the land will be discussed in more detail later, but for the moment it may be noted that Gertrude van der Marck, in one of her explanatory footnotes, suggests the nobility of a prairie feature and, by association, of the author:

'Paas-bloeme' one suspects is the Roundout Valley origin of this term applied to a flower, possibly seen by the author on this occasion for the first time--the American pasque-flower, the Iowa prairie type of which is Anemone patens: the knightliest little flower of the Iowa uplands.
--G. v. d. M. (p. 111).

Gertrude supplies explanations for but relatively few of the terms which old Vandemark employs in order to evoke the past--Iowa of the 1850's and 1860's--a time and place so new and strange that the very elements in nature there wanted names, and a namer. The sense of a lost Edenic past is enhanced by old Vandemark's role as a historian who reports various customs of the good old days and, sometimes, refers to the present for the purpose of contrast.

Taken all in all, the various terms which have been called "dialect" with respect to the Midwest and which are sprinkled throughout the novel do help to create the sense of a lost world. Some examples of these terms are as follows: big gun (p. 265), meaning a person of power; blizzard (p. 268), a severe storm of snow and wind; bottom (p. 219), an extent of land between the bed of a stream and the high land on either side, such bottoms being commonly

given the same name as the stream; breaking plow (p. 228), a plow specially made for breaking prairie sod; cutter (p. 406), a light sleigh; democrat wagon (p. 5), a light load wagon having two or more seats; full-bite high (p. 111), high enough to furnish excellent pasture; het up (p. 65), excited or angry; jowr (p. 311), to quarrel or talk impertinently; limpsey (p. 133), lacking vigor; lump it (p. 134), to endure quietly; meech (p. 251), to move stealthily; nepoed (p. 117), killed by bandits (Gertrude explains this term in one of her footnotes); out (p. 213), successful outcome; plow-hard (p. 155), exceedingly hard and dry; puccoon (p. 112), plant of genus *Lithospermum*, yielding yellow pigment; pucker (p. 237), bewilderment; puke (p. 212), Missourian; red up (p. 318), to set to rights, to clean up; shine (p. 53), strong liking; sithering (p. 36), sighing (Gertrude explains this one); smear case (p. 159), sour milk cheese; tow-headed (p. 212), having blonde or whitish hair; when Ring was a pup (p. 264), long ago.¹⁹

In his role as historian, old Vandemark reports certain social affairs or customs of the lost frontier. For example, there is "Captain Jenks," a

. . . party game substituted for dancing to the fiddle where the latter was objectionable (couples

¹⁹These terms are examples of those fifty-seven terms which Clara Ellen Speake gleaned from Vandemark's Folly and alphabetically listed, with definitions, in her "A List of Dialect Terms from the Works of Hamlin Garland and Herbert Quick," M. A. Thesis, State University of Iowa, 1926. A few, like blizzard, are no longer considered "dialect."

bowed, swung, and gayly 'bounced' as they sang,
 'Captain Jenks got tight last night,/ The gentle-
 man passes to the right;/ Swing that lady if you're
 not tight,/ For that's the style in the army').²⁰

Another party game was the "Needle's Eye," in which part-
 ners were required to kiss--

'Let's have the Needle's Eye!'

.
 'I won't play kissing games,' said one of the
 girls (p. 282).

The novel is a source-book for the tune titles that accom-
 panied such customs of that by-gone era:

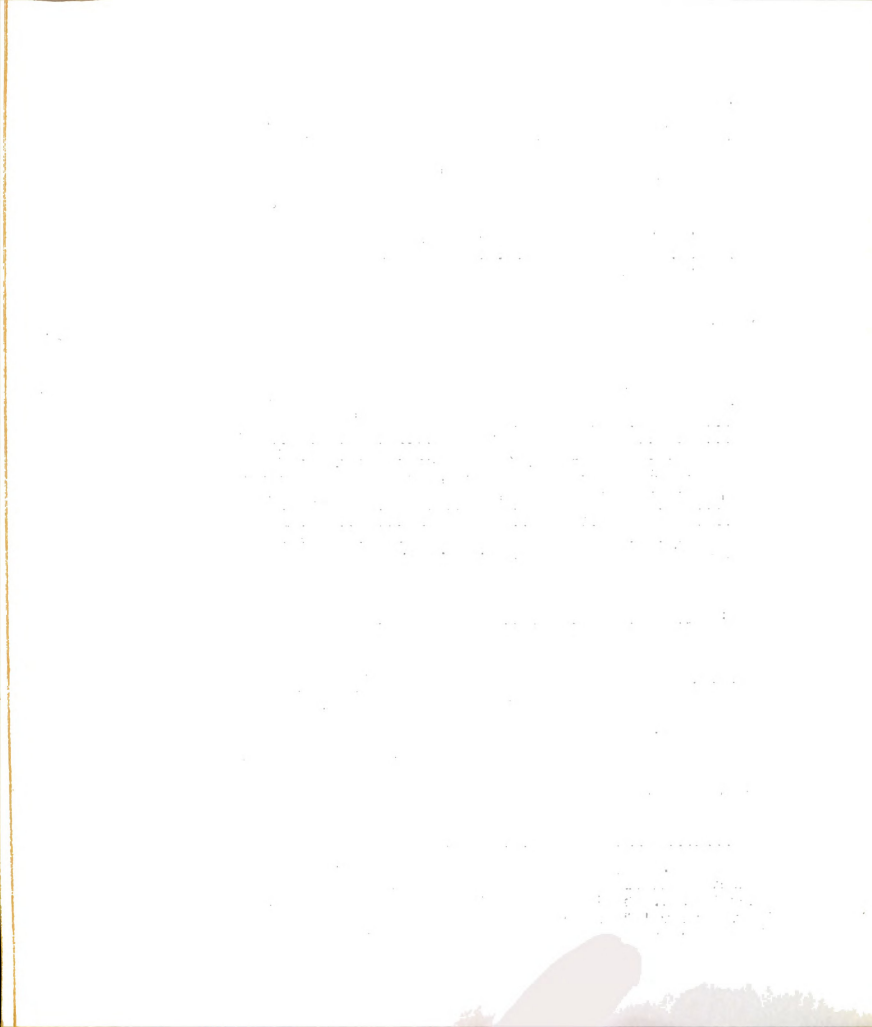
Oh, yes! I have seen [reports old Vandemark]
 . . . singing and hopping about to the tune of We
Come Here to Bounce Around; and also We'll All Go
Down to Rowser; and Hey, Jim Along, Jim Along Josie;
 and Angelina Do Go Home; and Good-by Susan Jane;
 and Shoot the Buffalo; and Weevilly Wheat; and Sandy
He Belonged to the Mill; and I've Been to the East,
I've Been to the West, I've Been to the Jay-Bird's
Altar; and Skip-to-My-Lou; and The Juniper Tree;
 and Go In and Out the Window; and The Jolly Old
Miller; and Captain Jinks . . . (p. 282).

Sometimes old Vandemark interprets the significance of such
 songs: The Little Old Sod Shanty on the Claim was a popu-
 lar song of the eighties that

. . . proved two things--that the American pioneer
 had learned to build with something besides timber,
 and that the Homestead Law had come into effect
 (p. 226).

Moreover, in his role as historian, old Vandemark
 comments on contemporary social problems or the lessons
 of the past that can be applied to the future. For

²⁰p. 282; also see Clara Ellen Speake's "A List of
 Dialect Terms from the Works of Hamlin Garland and Herbert
 Quick," M. A. Thesis, State University of Iowa, 1926; and
 Geneva Waters' "Herbert Quick, Social Historian of the
 Middle West," M. A. Thesis, State University of Iowa, 1940.



example, he explains the problems of financial panics:

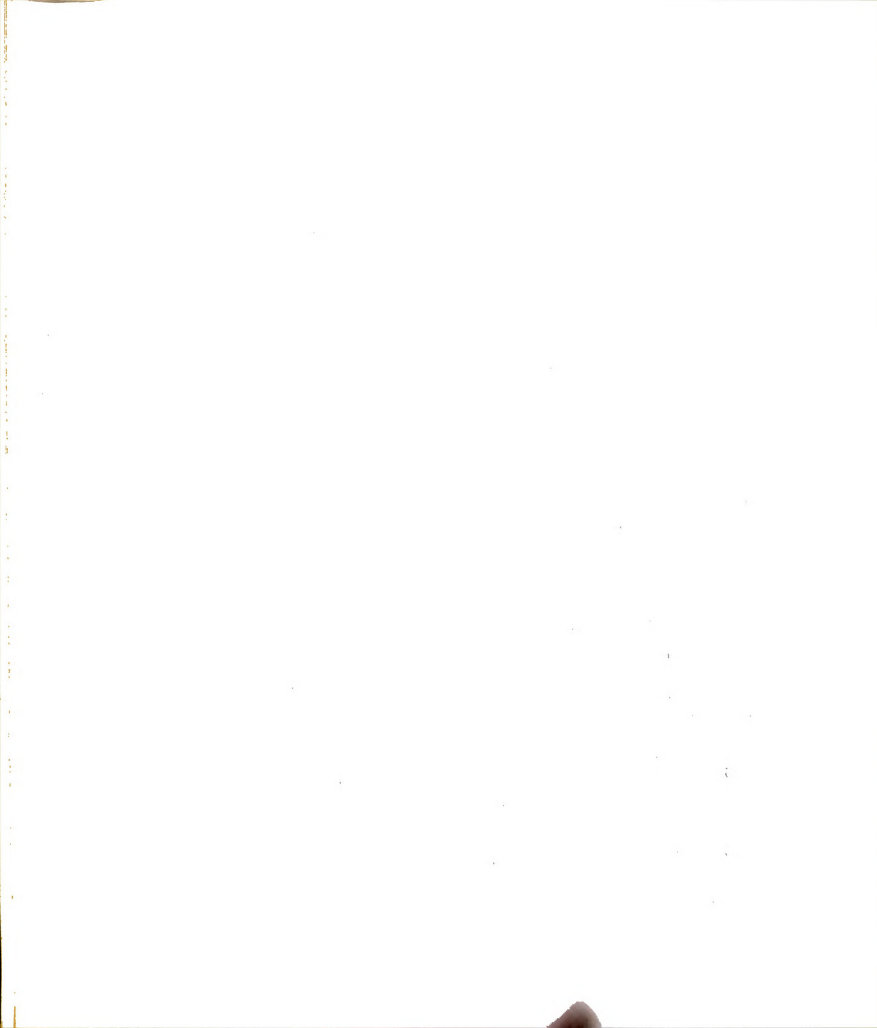
All financial panics come from land speculation.
Show me a way to keep land from advancing in
value, and I will tell you how to prevent finan-
cial panics (pp. 299-300).²¹

And he prays that America will be saved from the extremes of capitalistic monopoly and communistic revolution: "God save it from the mildews of monopoly and tyranny, and the Red rot of insurrection and from repression's explosions!" (p. 297). More often, however, old Vandemark laments the lost glory of the past--those "far-off Arcadian days" (p. 304, n.), when all seemed young and fresh, exciting, challenging, and truly worth while. The recurrent mood of his theme is, "Oh, the lost enchantment of youth . . . !" (p. 161). Why there was enchantment is illustrated, of course, in old Vandemark's story of the time when both he and his country were young.

The story of the young Jake Vandemark is structured into three main parts.²² Part one (Chapters I-V) is built around Jake's adventures on the Erie Canal; part two (Chapters VI-XII) is about his journey westward to Iowa; and

²¹This is another instance of the autobiographical parallel between the opinions of old Vandemark and Herbert Quick; Quick had explained this thesis in detail in his article, "Lessons from Former Panics," Moody's Magazine, IV (November, 1907), 559-566.

²²Quick did not formally group and label these three parts; instead, he proceeded in the opposite direction, as it were, by following Howland's advice to subdivide each of the twenty titled chapters in the novel, using simple Arabic numerals as subchapter heads. Letter of H. Quick to H. H. Howland, December 6, 1921, in the Bobbs Papers.



part three (Chapters XIII-XX) deals with his settling his own land. The whole story takes place in the 1850's and 1860's, most of it in the 1850's, when Jake (who was born in 1838) was a teenage pioneer.

This story has three main levels of meaning: autobiographical, or personal insofar as Quick himself is concerned; literary; and literary-mythic. The first level of meaning derives from Quick's feelings about his mother; the second, his use of the literary character Huckleberry Finn; and the third, his use of the Genesis story of Adam and Eve, and of the myth of the Northwest Passage to India. These levels are evident throughout Vandemark's Folly, but they are blended in such a way that the first dominates structural part one, the second is especially evident in parts one and two, and the third is the transcending interest in parts two and three.

In part one, Jake is depicted as having a good mother, Mary, and an evil stepfather, John Rucker. The theme of part one concerns Jake's separation from his mother, a separation brought about largely by Rucker, who is clearly portrayed as a villain: he married Jake's mother not out of love but for the property he thought he would inherit from Jake's father, he was away from home as a traveling salesman much of the time and was more attracted to a "colony of Free Lovers" than to the Puritan-Victorian family life, he put Jake to work in a cotton mill when the lad was only six years old, and he beat young Jake's back

raw (pp. 5-9). This physical punishment prompts Jake to run away from home and take up "a new life" on the canal (p. 11).

Jake's new life as a canal-boat hand soon becomes a disappointment to him because this life is incomplete without his mother. As he says, in Chapter III, "I See the World, and Suffer a Great Loss":

If I could have forgotten my wish to see my mother it would have been in many ways a pleasant life to me. I was never tired of the new and strange things I saw --new regions, new countries . . . (p. 29).

Moreover, the world that Jake sees has terrible imperfections--for example, the house of prostitution which he innocently visits--which are a shocking contrast to his mother's moral purity. He continually tries to find her; once returning to the home she has mysteriously left, he sits under the "old apple tree" and contemplates: "What should I do? Where was my mother? She was the only one in the world whom I cared for or who loved me" (p. 42). It is inside the "old hollow apple tree" (which Jake and his mother "called our post-office") that he finds a note, with an old shoe, from his mother saying that she had been taken westward by Rucker--

I read [the note] slowly . . . and turned my eyes west--where my mother had gone. I had lost her! How could any one be found who had disappeared into that region which swallowed up thousands every month? (p. 44).

Jake then decides to go west, primarily in order to rescue his ideal damsel in distress, his "kidnaped" mother (p. 44). His passion to save his mother from Rucker becomes dominant, almost blinding:

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'I mean to find my mother!' I cried. 'Where is she?' . . .

I ran . . . calling as I had so often done when a child, 'Ma, Ma! Where are you, ma!' . . . (p. 71).

Although Jake does come across Rucker, the villain with a "sneaking sort of smile" (p. 71), he does not find his mother with him.

Part one of the novel thus plays upon a classic theme, the quest of a son for his mother and against his father, but in Vandemark's Folly this theme does not spring from any literary source, such as Oedipus Rex or Hamlet. It is, rather, an example of autobiographical confession. To say that part one is autobiography is not to say, of course, that Jake Vandemark equals Herbert Quick.²³ Yet there is the highly significant correspondence between Jake and Herbert, and that is the great love each had for the mother. There is no other way to explain or understand the quest that so obviously governs part one of the novel. There can be no doubt that Herbert Quick had an extraordinary love and respect for his mother, Margaret Coleman Quick, that lasted a lifetime.²⁴

Furthermore, Herbert Quick's love for his mother

²³The external particulars are certainly inconsistent in their correspondences; for example, Jake was born in 1838, Herbert in 1861, but Jake's blue eyes and blondish hair are a parallel description of Herbert (not Herbert's father, Martin, who supposedly was the model for Jake and who had a dark complexion). But these are mere external particulars.

²⁴Personal interview with Mrs. Raymond N. (Margaret Q.) Ball, in Rochester, New York, April 6, 1966.

explains Jake's remarkable passion for the frontier land. The land in Vandemark's Folly is not only a virginal and feminine symbol but a mother symbol as well. It is Mother Earth. When Jake joins the great "stream of emigration," he is like--so the micro-macrocosmic image suggests--one little spermatazoon among many flowing toward the fertile valleys of the virgin West:

I drove out to the highway, and turning my prow to the west, I joined again in the stream of people swarming westward. The tide had swollen in the week during which I had laid by at the Prestons'. The road was rutted, poached deep where wet and beaten hard where dry, or pulverized into dust by the stream of emigration. Here we went, oxen, cows, mules, horses; coaches, carriages, blue jeans, corduroys, rags, tatters, silks, satins, caps, tall hats, poverty, riches; speculators, missionaries, land-hunters, merchants; criminals escaping from justice; couples fleeing from the law; families seeking homes; the wrecks of homes seeking secrecy; gold-seekers bearing southwest to the Overland Trail; politicians looking for places in which to win fame and fortune; editors hunting opportunities for founding newspapers; adventurers on their way to everywhere; lawyers with a few books; Abolitionists going to the Border War; innocent-looking outfits carrying fugitive slaves; officers hunting escaped negroes; and most numerous of all, homeseekers 'hunting country'--a nation on wheels, an empire in the commotion and pangs of birth . . . (p. 105).

Although the pioneers have multivarious characteristics, they are all associated with the "birth" that will be given them by their new, Western mother. And, by implied contrast, the civilization that "shot" them out is like a father--

Down I went with the rest, across ferries, through Dodgeville, Mineral Point and Platteville, past a thousand vacant sites for farms toward my own farm so far from civilization, shot out of civilization by the forces of civilization itself (p. 105).

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To Jake's way of thinking, the Eastern civilization that fathered him is associated with cruelty, slavery, tyranny, physical pain, corruptness, hate, discord, unhappiness: evil. The prairie land, on the other hand, means harmonious beauty, musical love, and motherly inspiration to Jake; Quick's evocation of this land is nearly beyond the power of words:

The prairie chickens now became the musicians of the morning and evening on the uplands, with their wild and intense and almost insane chorus, repeated over and over until it seemed as if the meaning of it must be forced upon every mind like a figure in music played with greatening power by a violinist so that the heart finally almost breaks with it--'Ka-a-a-a-a, da, ka, ka, ka! Ka-a-a-a-a-a-a-a, ka, ka, ka, ka, ka, ka, ka! KA-A-A-A-A-A-A, ka, ka, ka, ka, ka, ka, ka, ka!'--Oh, there is no way to tell it!--And then the cock filled in the harmony with his lovely contribution: facing the courted hen, he swelled out the great orange globes at the sides of his head, fluffed out his feathers, strutted forward a few steps, and tolled his deep-toned bell, with all the skill of a ventriloquist, making it seem far away when he was on a near-by knoll, like a velvet gong sounded with no stroke of the hammer, as if it spoke from some inward vibration set up by a mysterious current--a liquid 'Do, re, me,' here full and distinct, there afar off, the whole air tremulous with it, the harmony to the ceaseless fugue in the soprano clef of the rest of the flock--nobody will ever hear it again! Nobody ever drew from it, and from the howling of the wolves, the honking of the geese, the calls of the ducks, the strange cries of the cranes as they soared with motionless wings high overhead, or rowed their way on with long slow strokes of their great wings, or danced their strange reels and cotillions in the twilight; and from the myriad voices of curlew, plover, gopher, bob-o-link, meadow-lark, dick-cissel, killdeer and the rest--day-sounds and night sounds, dawn-sounds and dusk-sounds--more inspiration than did the stolid Dutch boy plodding west across Iowa that spring of 1855, with his fortune in his teams of cows, in the covered wagon they drew, and the deed to his farm in a flat packet of treasures

in a little iron-bound trunk--among them a rain-stained letter and a worn-out woman's shoe (pp. 140-141).

In Chapter V, "The End of a Long Quest," Jake finds his mother, Mary Brouwer Vandemark (as Jake calls her, thus cutting Rucker's name out of the family record, p. 75). But he finds that she is dead and buried, in Madison, Wisconsin. (This comes at the end of part one of the novel.) Though saddened, of course, Jake takes the deed his mother left him to some land farther west, the "Promised Land" west of the Mississippi, and continues his journey. And when he first sees the Iowa prairie he identifies it with his mother:

It was not the thought of my mother that brought the tears to my eyes, but my happiness in finding the newest, strangest, most delightful, sternest, most wonderful thing in the world--the Iowa prairie--that made me think of my mother. If I only could have found her alive! If I only could have had her with me! (p. 113).

Moreover, the sight of the new land promises a rebirth for Jake:

It was sublime! Bird, flower, grass, cloud, wind, and the immense expanse of sunny prairie, swelling up into undulations like a woman's breasts turgid with milk for a hungry race. I forgot myself and my position in the world, my loneliness . . . the problems of my life . . . (pp. 112-113).

And Jake subsequently associates with the new land all that which he associated with his mother--freedom, purity, harmonious beauty and love, happiness--or the possibility of such goodness.

In conclusion to this analysis of part one of

Vandemark's Folly, it should be emphasized that Quick's personal symbols for the good mother and the wicked father are highly important to an understanding of why he wished to return to the past, in memory, by writing a story that had the "lost prairie of Iowa in it"; why he depicted (in previous fiction as well as in the Midland Trilogy) rural life as desirable and urbanization as bad; why he depicted the land speculators (those who used Mother Earth as a mere plaything) as special villains, who (like Rucker, the crooked lawyer Jackway, and Buck Gowdy) could smile and smile and still be villains. Of course when, at the end of part two of Vandemark's Folly, Jake's "Plow Weds the Sod" (Chapter XIII), the personal significance of Quick's love affair with the land is subsumed by other significances.

A noteworthy bridge from the personal world of Quick to his public world was his use of an established American literary character. Few readers could fail to recognize the similarities between young Jake Vandemark and Huckleberry Finn: perhaps this is why Quick did not see fit to mention Mark Twain in any way, neither in Vandemark's Folly nor in correspondence about it.²⁵ In any case, Quick's use of

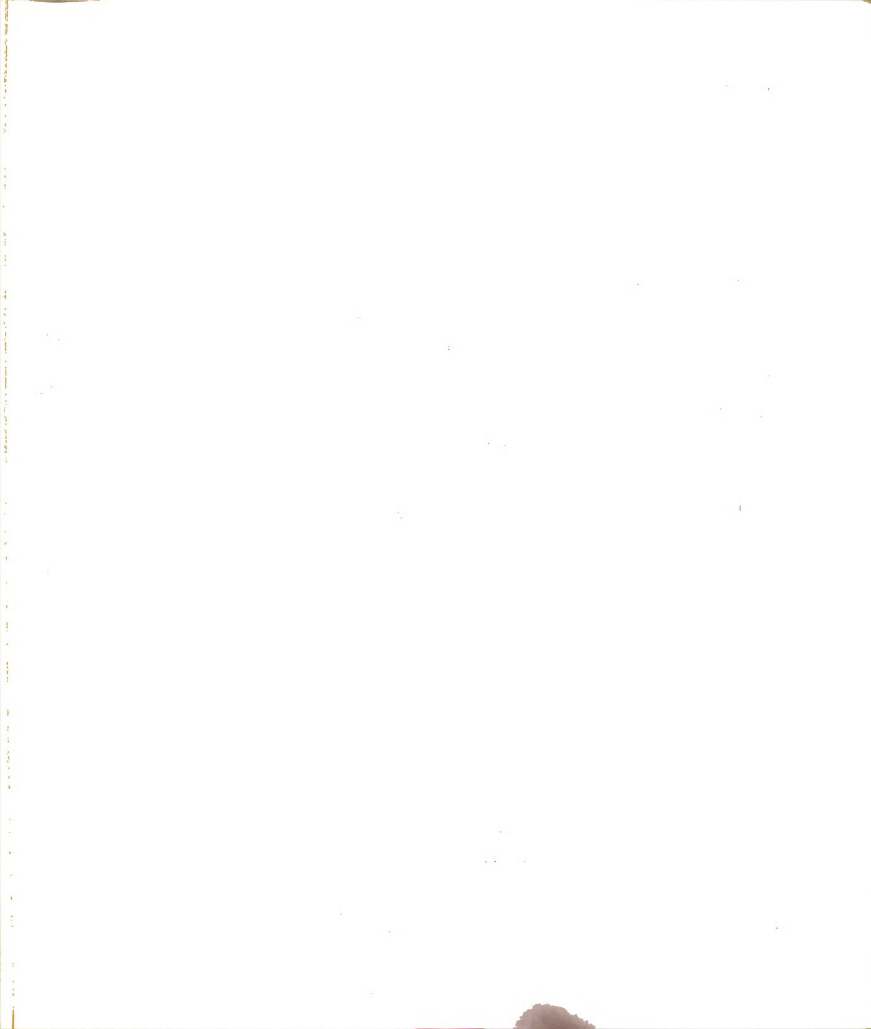
²⁵This is not to say that Quick was not expressly familiar with Twain's writings. In a brief article for Collier's entitled "Weeds and Literature," Quick explained why Twain did not "immortalize the tumbleweed along with the jackass rabbit, the coyote, and the sage-brush . . . in the days of Roughing It . . . ": "Mark Twain failed to mention the tumbleweed because he didn't see it." This undated article, which may or may not have been published, is in Miscellaneous Vol. I of the Quick Manuscripts in Des Moines, Iowa. Also, Quick did refer to Twain in the

Twain's character, especially noticeable in parts one and two of Vandemark's Folly, suggests the former's need to relate himself in some way to the public tradition of American literature.

Jake is an extension of Huck in several senses. First there are the obvious matters of age and motivation. Jake's adventures on the canal boat occur when he is about twelve, while Huck's on the River occur when he is thirteen or fourteen. In Chapter VII, Jake's "Adventure on the Old Ridge Road" westward comes when he is seventeen. Like Huck, Jake becomes disenchanted by a corrupt civilization and his family life; even Jake's alcoholic stepfather, with his "yellowish beard all over his face" (p. 4), is like Huck's bewhiskyed and bewiskered Pap--cruel and selfish. Much of Jake's story is about his lighting out for the territory; he is a slightly older Huck who has further adventures there. As Huck, cramped by "sivilized" ways and cognizant of the hypocrisy or greed or corruption of the towns, repeatedly yearns for nature as symbolized by the River, so does Jake have a romantic attraction to the innocent, unspoiled, virgin Land.

Like Huck, Jake is bothered by the problem of Negro slavery (in the Underground Railway episode, pp. 92-105). Jake, like Huck, is finally willing to help Negro slaves

other two novels of the Midland Trilogy: Twain's "story of the Jumping Frog" is mentioned in The Hawkeye, p. 426; Pudd'n-head Wilson is mentioned in The Invisible Woman, p. 139.



escape to a "heaven" of freedom; but as Huck ironically says that he will "go to hell" for disobeying man-made law, Jake un-ironically says that he will obey the higher moral law:

'Now,' he [Dunlap, an Abolitionist Jake meets on the trail] went on, as the negroes disappeared, 'you have it in your power to exercise the right of an American citizen and perform the God-accursed legal duty to report these fugitives at the next town, join a posse to hunt them down under a law of the United States, get a reward for doing it, and know that you have vindicated the law--or you can stand with God and tell the law to go to hell--where it came from--and help the Underground Railway to carry these people to heaven. Which will you do?'

'I'll tell the law to go to hell,' said I (p. 101).

Like Huck, too, Jake has a best male friend who is, in a sense, a social outcast, but instead of this friend's being a runaway Negro slave, he is an immigrant from Norway, Magnus Thorkelson, trying to find a place in the sun of American society.

Like Huck's heroic endeavors to rescue a female in distress, Mary Jane, there are Jake's dangerous attempts (one successful and the other only partially so) to rescue Virginia Royall and Rowena Fewkes. Moreover, Jake's feelings for Virginia are like Huck's for Mary Jane: the awed respect and protective stance of an adolescent's sincere love, as for example when Jake, alone with Virginia on the trail westward, protects her from the wolves (pp. 157-158) and from the outlaws (p. 178 et passim), and lets her have the whole wagon to herself at night.

Both Huck and Jake strive to do what is right. Each has an innate sense of justice. For example, Huck

feels disgusted and miserable when the Duke and King are tarred-and-feathered because he knows that although they were "rascallions" this punishment did not fit their crimes. And Jake has similar feelings that tar-and-feathering was much too drastic a punishment for the "crime" of claim jumping (p. 246).

Like Huck, too, Jake has a sense of responsibility. An example of it is his willingness to guard the county funds in Chapter XV, "I Save a Treasure, and Start a Feud," which is reminiscent of the mysterious origins of feuds per se as given in the Grangerford episode in Huckleberry Finn and also of Huck's efforts to save the Wilkes' gold. But the most important example of Jake's good-willed responsibility, even to the point of what he considers self-sacrifice, is his decision in Chapter XVII, "I Receive a Proposal--and Accept." The situation is this: a wealthy land-speculator, Buck Gowdy, has made Rowena Fewkes pregnant but will not marry her.²⁶ Growing understandably desperate, Rowena finally proposes to Jake. Jake, even though he has long harbored the dream of marrying Virginia, accepts--but only after wrestling with himself in a way reminiscent, again, of the "All right, then, I'll go to hell" passage in Huckleberry Finn.

Because Quick did not want it publicized that any

²⁶It is Magnus Thorkelson who marries Rowena, two days after she gives birth to Owen Lovejoy Gowdy, and this entire affair becomes the controlling issue in the final novel of the Midland Trilogy.

of the Trilogy was his personal story,²⁷ he employed two main devices to keep the personal element private as well as to establish a rapport with his public audience. One of these devices was his use of Twain's boy--of an established literary character who had not lost the capability to enjoy the freedom and delights of innocent nature and who had the good sense to return to it, again and again, to escape the corrupting influence of the towns. The other device was the Edenic myth, which will be discussed shortly. Quick did not rely on Twain's character alone because Huck Finn, though suitable in many respects, lacked a very important ingredient: the dignity thought to be inherent in titled nobility.²⁸

Quick could not give Vandemark any title such as sir, lord, or king. To do so would be to run the risk, like Melville's (see note 28), of losing the contemporary American audience. To do so would be un-American. To do so would be to touch off a comical response--and Quick did not intend a comical response--like that which derives from the intentional incongruity of Twain's Duke and King prancing about in sword play on an old raft in the middle

²⁷Quick said this even about that novel, The Hawkeye, which he most freely acknowledged, in private, to be highly autobiographical. Letter of H. Quick to D. L. Chambers, December 7, 1822 [1922], in the Bobbs Papers.

²⁸This problem is very similar to that of Melville's Ishmael when he confesses that he has only to do with a poor old shabby whale hunter and then, in the following chapter of Moby-Dick, calls this hunter King Ahab.

of the muddy Mississippi and persuading Jim and Huck to wait on them with all the trappings of royal splendor. Yet Quick wanted to give his hero a title of nobility, and he did (as discussed above) build a suggestion of nobility into the name Vandemark and he also named Jake's dream girl Virginia Royall.²⁹ If Quick's American audience had been capable of seriously accepting the terminology of the Arthurian myth, Quick would have used it, probably with abandon, for not only would the "knighthood" terminology in that myth have satisfied his want but also the Arthurian theme of adultery would have enhanced its corresponding theme in Vandemark's Folly. But Quick had learned that "knighthood" parallels--such as the experimental Arthurian language in a passage in The Broken Lance, already discussed--were not a popular success in America; by 1921 he could not, though he wished to, express a favoring of "When Knighthood Was in Flower."

The question naturally occurs: why did Quick wish to employ titles of nobility? One cannot help but answer that he somehow identified these titles with the glory of the past, a past not only of the 1850's but a past that antedated even the explorers sent by the mother countries of Europe, and that he wanted to make sure his American audience would understand Vandemark as a high-ranking, noble person, and to remind his audience that there was once such a person--in the days before urbanization brought

²⁹Also, Quick did allow Vandemark to have a "castor" in his house which was "a sort of title of nobility" (p. 306).

its train of problems to America. This problem of nobility --i.e., the manner of indicating it--was a knotty one for Quick, and it is difficult to determine whether the blame--OR praise, as the case may be--should fall on Quick or his American audience.

In any case, Quick obviously did not draw upon "knighthood" or Arthurian-myth terms in Vandemark's Folly. Instead, he drew from the Bible,³⁰ which he had read and re-read since his boyhood in Iowa,³¹ and, more specifically, from what R. W. B. Lewis has called "the noble but illusory myth of the American as Adam."³² In the myth of Adam, Quick found a character as innocent as the boys he depicted in much of his previous fiction, and now he saw the further potentiality of that character to satisfy the want of nobility in Vandemark's Folly, for Adam was not only high ranking but the highest ranking creature in his domain. Adam, created in the image of the Lord God, was lord, and master of all save the tree of knowledge, in a world as wonderful as the Iowa prairie first seemed to Jake Vandemark.

Even in part one of the novel there are hints that Quick had in mind the Adamic myth, though in a negative

³⁰Unlike his use of Huck Finn, Quick's use of the Bible is explicitly acknowledged several times in Vandemark's Folly--all showing "the Bible to be an inspired work" (p. 258).

³¹"I Picked My Goal at Ten--Reached It at Sixty," p. 50.

³²The American Adam (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 89.

way here. Jake is depicted as a child who is simply not at home in the corrupt environment of the East, and (unlike Huck Finn) he does not really learn to understand that environment. Instead of making a choice based upon an acquired understanding of Eastern life, Jake instinctively recognizes his need "to be free more than anything else . . . [his need for the] fresh air" of an Edenic environment (p. 28), and he continually hears the beckoning "voices of the West" (p. 50). When Jake is challenged by the bullying canal-hand, Ace, over an apple which symbolizes the alternative of tyranny or freedom,³³ he hits out as blindly as Melville's Adamic hero, Billy Budd. When Jake goes with Captain Sproule to see the "worst vices and crimes" of the Eastern environment, the narrator makes it clear that a child should not see these crimes (p. 32); Jake is a child but "put in a most unchildlike position" (p. 26). East of the Mississippi, Jake is an apparently easy victim for such exploiters as the crooked lawyer Jackway because he does not understand their language; but although he does not know his tort's from his tart's Jake does have an innate goodness which, in the last analysis, protects him. What he needs is the environment that will suit his Adamic character.

At the beginning of part two, in Chapter VI, "I

³³pp. 22-23. The apple that Ace snatches away from Jake means tyranny if Jake does not fight; it means freedom if he does. Jake instinctively feels this issue, not rationally.

Become Cow Vandemark," Jake's Adamic character becomes perfectly clear. When he first sees the Iowa prairie, it is likened to a "great green sea" (p. 111) which washes away the wickedness of the Eastern civilization. The prairie symbolizes the same baptismal function as the Atlantic Ocean did for his European forebears. Undergoing his birth—or rebirth—as Adam, Jake responds in a manner suitable to his archetype:

I shall never forget the sight. It was like a great green sea. . . . all the swales were coated thick with an emerald growth full-bite high, and in the deeper, wetter hollows grew cowslips already showing their glossy, golden flowers. The hillsides were thick with the woolly possblummies in their furry spring coats protecting them against the frost and chill, showing purple-violet on the outside of a cup filled with golden stamens, the first fruits of the prairie flowers; on the warmer southern slopes a few of the splendid bird's-foot violets of the prairie were showing the azure color which would soon make some of the hillsides as blue as the sky; and standing higher than the peering grass rose the rough-leaved stalks of green which would soon show us the yellow puccoons and sweet-williams and scarlet lilies and shooting stars, and later the yellow rosin-weeds, Indian dye-flower and goldenrod. . . .

The wild-fowl were clamoring north for the summer's campaign of nesting. Everywhere the sky was harrowed by the wedged wild geese, their voices as sweet as organ tones. . . .

It was sublime! Bird, flower, grass, cloud, wind, and the immense expanse of sunny prairie. . . . I forgot myself . . . my loneliness . . . problems . . . ; my heart swelled, and my throat filled. I sat looking at it, with the tears trickling from my eyes, the uplift of my soul more than I could bear . . . (pp. 111-113).

Unlike that of the East, the language of the prairie West is music to the ears of this Adamic person (see p. 140 for another example). Instantly and instinctively in tune with

the nature which God created for him, Jake is what R. W. B. Lewis calls "The [Adamic] Hero in Space."³⁴ As Jake says, "I was made for the open, I guess" (p. 115). And, as befitting his newly found identity and environment, Jake earns a new name: in the sentimentally trying process of trading his horses (Flora and Fanny) for cows (Lily and Cherry) and in the further trading of "one sound cow for two lame ones" (p. 120)--cows which form the basis of Jake's subsequent agricultural prosperity and which he names (Lily and Cherry), like Adam naming the animals--Jake becomes "Cow" Vandemark. As "Cow," a nickname suggesting kinship with one of the most

³⁴The present paragraph on Vandemark is very similar to Lewis's interpretation of Cooper's Natty Bumppo. Lewis cites a key passage from Cooper to support his claim that Bumppo is "the full-fledged fictional Adam . . . : The trial successfully passed--the trial of honor, courage, and self-reliance--Deerslayer earns his symbolic reward of a new name.

'What we call him?' [asks the dying Iroquois].

'Deerslayer is the name I bear now. . . . '

'That good name for boy--poor name for warrior. He get better quick. No fear there'--the savage had strength sufficient, under the strong excitement he felt, to raise a hand and tap the young man on his breast--'eye sartain--finger lightning--aim, death--great warrior soon. No Deerslayer--Hawk-eye--Hawk-eye--Hawk-eye. Shake hand.'

The new hero rejoices in his new name and status: 'Hawkeye! That's not a bad name for a warrior, sounding much more manful and valiant than Deerslayer.' Like his closest equivalent in recent fiction, Isaac McCaslin, on the occasion of his first ritualistic encounter with Old Ben in William Faulkner's The Bear, Hawkeye could reflect (he virtually does) that 'he was witnessing his own birth'--or rebirth as the American Adam: accomplished appropriately in the forest on the edge of a lake, with no parents near at hand, no sponsors at the baptism; springing from nowhere, as Tocqueville had said, standing alone in the presence of God and Nature." See The American Adam, pp. 104-105.

innocent and inoffensive of God's creatures, young Vandemark plods on across the prairie to his own farm land in Iowa (to a township which will soon bear his name), and, like Adam, he is lord of all the natural elements in this new, Edenic world because he is in harmony with it.

This is not to say that the rest of the novel is merely one idyllic scene after another. No. Threats and temptations creep into Eden; complications arise as Cow Vandemark is confronted by difficulties, and the result of this confrontation is the most remarkable aspect of Quick's use of the myth. This will become clear when it is understood that Quick rewrote Genesis in two ways. In the first way there is no fall, but in the second way there is a fall.

The characters in Quick's two versions of Genesis are as follows. In the first version, Cow Vandemark and Virginia Royall are Adam and Eve, and Cow almost plays the role of the serpentine villain too. In the second, Magnus Thorkelson and Rowena Fewkes are Adam and Eve, and Buck Gowdy is the Serpent. In both versions, Elder and Grandma Thorndyke represent the Lord God. As both versions are developed in the novel, the one complementing and giving meaning to the other, the land becomes characterized by two main and contrary viewpoints.

The story of Cow and Virginia as Adam and Eve is told in Chapters IX, X, and XI, the thematic as well as the nearly exact structural center of the novel. In this key episode, Quick followed Moses very closely indeed,

emphasizing the theme of sexual temptation and including the use of such symbols from Genesis 2 and 3 as the secure and happy setting in nature, the forbidden tree, the serpent, and clothes. The cardinal difference is, again, that in Quick's first version of Genesis there is no fall.

At the beginning of Chapter IX, "The Grove of Destiny," Cow is pictured getting up in the morning, whistling some popular tunes, preparing the first meal of the new day: happily minding his own business in the safe grove he fortunately finds himself in. He is not alone here. Virginia is with him, lying dormant, she having escaped on the trail west from "that man," as she calls her villainous brother-in-law, Buck Gowdy (and there is a hint that this "snake" had intended to molest her sexually, p. 163), and having become an "Embarrassing Addition" to Cow's wagon in the previous chapter. Now the most puzzling symbol in Genesis 2 is the rib that was used during the first, and certainly most remarkable, surgical operation. Why a rib? Why not a phalanx or a kidney? An answer, a realistic correspondence in the imagery, is suggested when Cow Vandemark taps "the side of the wagon"--which has been so much a part of him that it is a symbol of him and which is a covered wagon, with ribs supporting the covering--in order to awaken Virginia, whom he calls by her first name. She emerges from this Adam's ribbed wagon in a birth-like trauma. (This trauma is actually induced by Virginia's fear that the person calling her first name must be the villainous Gowdy.)

Also, in this opening passage of Chapter IX, the narrator does not neglect to underscore the fact that the Lord God, represented by Grandma Thorndyke, entertained his own peculiar notions about sex and reproduction:

To Grandma Thorndyke sex must have seemed the original curse imposed on our first parents; eggs and link sausages were repulsive because they suggested the insides of animals and vital processes; and a perfect human race would have been to her made up of beings nourished by the odors of flowers, and perpetuated by the planting of the pairings of finger-nails in antiseptic earth--or something of the sort. . . . every trace of the [biological] facts . . . had to be concealed, and if not they were ignored by Grandma Thorndyke. New England all over! (p. 163).

It is a repetition of Genesis, too, since Grandma Thorndyke supposes that "our first parents," Adam and Eve, were themselves created by some special technique, if not by the "planting of the pairings of finger-nails in antiseptic earth," then "something of the sort," and certainly not by the commonly understood biological method. In the "Grove of Destiny" episode of Vandemark's Folly, Cow and Virginia are likewise depicted as being parentless, the pure products of some sort of virgin birth; it is even suggested that Virginia's birth, like Eve's, is associated with a rib image. And certainly out West, Cow does not have any parents in the common sense of that term, he having been born--or reborn--as Adam from the Edenic prairie land. (Even when Cow was back East, before he acquired his new name, his biological father did not appear, and he remains a mystery throughout the novel, and his mother was

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characterized as being as good as the Virgin Mother, after whom Mary Vandemark is named.) In both Genesis and the "Grove" episode, the hero and heroine begin in an innocent state, parentless and sinless, with no curse on them. In both stories, biological sex is associated with sin, or a curse. And, as in Genesis, Cow-Adam cannot escape this curse, cannot remain antiseptically pure and innocent, if, by definition, he falls into sinful sexual activity.

As the "Grove of Destiny" episode develops, and as the solitary and parentless pair make their way a bit farther west, Cow begins to recognize the female attributes of Virginia. He "notices" that she has some features different from his own, and he thinks of her as he would the live stock he has tended and knows so well:

First I noticed that her hair, though dark brown, gave out gleams of bright dark fire as the sun shone through it in certain ways. . . . I have seen the same flame in the mane of a black horse bred from a sorrel dam or sire. As a stock breeder I have learned that in such cases there is in the heredity the genetic unit of red hair overlaid with black pigment. It is the same in people. . . . I was fascinated by that smoldering fire in the girl's hair; and in looking at it I finally grew bolder, as I saw that she did not seem to suspect my scrutiny, and I saw that her brows and lashes were black, and her eyes very, very blue--not the buttermilk blue of the Dutchman's eyes, like mine, with brows and lashes lighter than the sallow Dutch skin, but deep larkspur blue, with a dark edging to the pupil. . . . Her skin, too, showed her ruddy breed . . . and her nose was freckled. Glimpses of her neck and bosom revealed a skin of the thinnest, whitest texture--quite milk-white, with pink showing through on account of the heat. She had little strong brown hands, and the foot which she put on the dashboard was a very trim and graceful foot like that of a thoroughbred mare, built for flight rather than work, and it swelled

beautifully in its grass-stained white stocking above her slender ankle to the modest skirt (p. 166).

Cow's response to Virginia is thus as naive and as intentionally wholesome as his Adamic response to the beauties of the virgin prairie, and is Quick's imagined view of Adam's detailed response to Eve.

Before Cow's study of Virginia's "powerful attractions" (p. 167) develops into outright sexual temptation, Quick allows Elder and Grandma Thorndyke to appear on the scene in order to issue a warning about the welfare of Virginia and to further identify her with Eve. This brief scene is the only place in the entire Trilogy where Virginia's original first name is disclosed:

'Her name is Royall,' said Grandma Thorndyke
 . . . 'Genevieve Royall. . . . She is sixteen years
 old. . . . Have you seen such a person?'
 'No, I hain't,' said I. The name 'Genevieve'
 helped me a little in this deceit (pp. 168-169).

While Cow and the Thorndykes converse, Genevieve Royall--the original Eve royal--is hiding in the wagon, and she and Cow feel justified in their "deceit," do not feel guilt or shame, because they have not committed a sexual sin. But the potentiality for such sinning and such falling from royal heights is just what the Thorndykes warn against when the Elder makes the reminder that Buck Gowdy is still "hunting high and low" for Virginia. Like the Lord God's warning Adam and Eve not to eat the forbidden fruit, the Elder's admonition says, in effect, beware of the serpent (pp. 169-170). Both the Lord God and the Thorndykes play

the important role of warners.

Next, after the Thorndykes leave him and a highly providential rain covers the tracks of his wagon, Cow feels that no one and especially no villainous third party will be able to find him and Virginia; but he also starts to feel a little guilt: "We were alone. . . . I was suddenly possessed of the impulse to hide, like a thief making for cover with stolen goods" (p. 174). He then heads for a "rounded crown of trees" (p. 174), a grove even more appropriate than the previous one for his royal companion, and this becomes their "hiding-place" (p. 175). They hide not so much from Elder and Grandma Thorndyke--not so much from the Lord God Whose commandment they have disobeyed--as from the serpentine Gowdy.

And, as the situation develops, it becomes clear that the serpent is not to be considered as some fabulous third person, for only two are present in this "Grove of Destiny." The "evil spirits" (p. 179) of the "daredevil" (p. 185) Bushyayer bandit gang pass near Cow and Virginia's Edenic hiding-place, but they do not intrude. The Satanic serpent is, rather, an animalistic part of Cow himself, Quick's purpose here being to show the emotions of "the way of a maid with a man, Nature's way--but a perilous way for such a time and such a situation":

'We've lost Gowdy--forever' [says Cow].

I thought at first that she was going to throw her arms about my neck; but instead she took both my hands and pressed them in a long clasp. It was

the first time she had touched me, or shown emotion toward me--emotions of the sort for which I was now eagerly longing. I did not return her pressure. I merely let her hold my hands until she dropped them. I wanted to do a dozen things, but there is nothing stronger than the unbroken barriers of a boy's modesty--barriers strong as steel, which once broken down become as though they never were; while a woman even in her virgin innocence, is always offering unconscious invitation, always revealing ways of seeming approach, always giving to the stalled boy arguments against his bashfulness--arguments which may prove absurd or not when he acts upon them (p. 175).

The accumulating animal imagery in the narrative traces Cow's perilously growing resolution to act the role of the serpent. At night, when Virginia is asleep in the wagon alone, Cow's modesty is replaced by an animalism as he prowls "about silently so as not to rouse her, prowling like a wolf" (p. 176). And in the light of day:

I had now in a dim, determined, stubborn way claimed this girl in my heart for my own; and I felt without really thinking of it, that I could best foreclose my lien by defeating all comers before I dragged her yielding to my cave. It is the way of all male animals--except spiders, perhaps, and bees--and a male animal was all I was that morning . . . (p. 182).

Ever mindful of that "immemorial duty which man owes to woman" (p. 188), Cow watches Virginia "as a cat watches a bird" (p. 186). He lays "plans" for her "much as a wolf or badger might have done" (p. 192)--plans which become "poison plots" of "deviltry" (p. 194). He even finds occasion to "creep" on his "belly through the brush and weeds" (p. 182)--like a reptile--"crawling like a lizard" (p. 183). All these animal images are summed up in the final one, that of a "snake," and Cow explains how

dangerously close he came to playing the role of that snake:

'What is it? Are you sick? What shall I do if you get sick!'

'No,' I said, 'I am not sick. I am all right --now.'

'But something has happened,' she insisted. 'You are weak as well as pale. Let me do something for you. What was it?'

'A snake,' I said, for an excuse. 'A rattlesnake. It struck at me and missed. It almost struck me. I'll be all right now.'

The longer I live the surer I am that I told her very nearly the truth (p. 193).

During his state of "agitated" animalistic, snake-like emotions, Cow rationalizes that "no matter what happened, it would be pure and blameless--for it would be us!" (p. 177). But this only heightens his temptation. Even the idyllic grove--which is a miniature Eden (complete with stream, crabapple tree, and almost magically provided food) and which is described in detail in Chapter X, "The Grove of Destiny Does Its Work"--does not pacify him:

We used to go fishing along the creek; and ate many a savory mess of bullheads, sunfish and shiners, which I prepared and cooked. We had butter, and the cows, eased of the labors of travel, grew sleek and round, and gave us plenty of milk. I saved for Virginia all the eggs laid by my hens, except those used by her in the cooking. She gave me the daintiest of meals; and I taught her to make bread. To see her molding it with her strong small hands, was enough to have made me insane if I had had any sense left. She showed me how to make vinegar pies; and I failed in my pies made of the purple-flowered prairie oxalis; but she triumphed over me by using the deliciously acid leaves as a flavoring for sandwiches--we were getting our first experience as prairie-dwellers. . . . One day I cooked a delicious mess of cowslip greens with a ham-bone. She seemed to be happy; and I should have been if I had not made myself so miserable. I remember almost every moment of this time--so long ago (pp. 188-189).

The crisis in the "Grove" episode is indicated in the paragraphs immediately following the one, just quoted, about Edenic bliss versus "miserable" temptation:

One day as we were fishing we were obliged to clamber along the bank where a tree crowded us so far over the water that Virginia, in stooping to pass under the body of the tree, was about to fall; and I jumped down into the stream and caught her in my arms as she was losing her hold. . . .

'Don't let me fall,' she begged.

'I won't,' I said--and I could say no more (p. 189).

The "more" that is implied--perhaps over-implied--is that the "tree" here should bear some of the responsibility for, as in Genesis, "Man's miserable fall"; that the "fall" here is averted, athletically; and that the fall would be into a muddy "stream" that symbolizes time and human corruption.³⁵ Moreover, as Cow stands holding Virginia from falling into the stream of temporality (not eternity), she expresses

³⁵Vandemark's Folly contains eight pictorial illustrations, painted by N. C. Wyeth, intended to emphasize key scenes. Of these illustrations, two are especially noteworthy. One (facing p. 190) shows Cow standing in the stream, holding Virginia in his arms, he looking with a cal f-like affection at the side of her face and she looking down with a wondering, girlish smile at the stream, and both their shadows merged into one shadow on the tree in the immediate background, and the caption appropriately is, "'Don't let me fall,' she begged." The other illustration (facing the title page) is a direct contrast, for it depicts Cow in the broad and open daylight, the sky and grazing cows in the background, he standing, his left hand against the forehead of his visibly perplexed face, not knowing whether to go or stay, and at his feet, dressed in an apron that recalls the "apron" in Genesis, is Rowena Fewkes, in a fallen position, on her knees, her face hidden, her head lowered and her arms raised up prayerfully toward Cow and the heavenly sky. These two illustrations are highly suggestive that Virginia Royall and Rowena Fewkes are the Unfallen and the Fallen Eve, respectively.

the "'hope'" that he "'didn't lose the fish,'" which are symbolic of the bountiful food of Eden (p. 189). The whole issue underneath their talk is whether Edenic innocence will be lost or not; and the narrator emphasizes the importance of this issue as it concerns not only an individual person's life, which lasts a "second," but also the "long" history of the human race: "Now this conversation lasted a second, from one way of looking at it, and a very long time from another . . . " (p. 190). Cow, his hands full of "Destiny" in this high point in Quick's fictional writings, does not make a snap decision; the suspense is intended to mount:

'How will you get me back on land?' she asked; and really it was a subject which one might have expected to come up sooner or later.

I turned about with her and looked down-stream; then I turned back and looked up-stream; then I looked across to the opposite bank, at least six feet away; then I carried her up-stream for a few yards; then I started back down-stream.

'There's no good place there,' said I--and I looked a long, long look into her eyes which happened to be scanning my face just then. She blushed rosily.

'Any place will do,' she said. 'Let me down right here where I can get the fish!' (p. 190).

Finally, forgoing the obvious alternative of besoiling Virginia by letting her fall with a dramatic plop into the creek, Cow decides to preserve Edenic purity:

And slowly, reluctantly, with great pains that she should not be scratched by briars, bitten by snakes, brushed by poison-ivy, muddied by the wet bank, or threatened with another fall, I put her down. She looked diligently in the grass for the fish, picked them up, and ran off to camp (p. 190).

The scene back at the camp is both anticlimactic and a glimpse of what might have been alternative consequences. At first not finding Virginia by "her favorite crabapple tree" (p. 192), which symbolizes the temptation of forbidden fruit in a way more obvious than the unspecified kind of tree by the stream, Cow hears her talking strangely, and then he sees her putting clothes onto a naked "little wax doll" and talking to it as though it were her baby (pp. 192-193). Fruit tree, nakedness, clothes, parenthood: the same pattern as in Genesis. Cow and Virginia did not fall into that mythic pattern, but Quick's moral is that they would have if Cow had seduced Virginia. When Cow next speaks to her, he makes it clear that he has subdued the "snake," the serpent part of himself (p. 193). He finds the thought of potential parenthood, its encumbrances, chilling, and the sight of Virginia playing with her doll (a dress rehearsal of future possibilities) suggests an association that is at once more chilling--

I turned cold as I thought of how her affection might have been twisted into devilry had it not been so strangely brought home to me that she was a child, with a good deal of the mother in her. I turned cold as I thought of her playing with her doll while I had been out on the prairie laying poison plots against her innocence, her defenselessness, her trust in me.

Why, she was like my mother! . . . (p. 194)

--and also heartwarming. For, as Cow goes on to tell Virginia about "the old hollow apple tree" and all about his mother, he warms up to her. Two themes of the novel (the quest of a boy for his mother and the Genesis theme) here

touch, with "a mingling of feeling"--"joy" and "guilt": guilt because Cow had failed to find and comfort his mother, and joy because of his budding realization that Virginia might become a wholly satisfactory substitute, and she does start to mother him, wiping the tears from his eyes and telling him that he is "a good boy" (p. 195).

But to return to the Genesis parallel. The last, brief part of the story of Cow and Virginia as Adam and Eve is given in Chapter XI, "In Defense of the Proprieties." This, too, is somewhat anticlimactic, for the fate of the young pair had been settled in the crisis scene in the "Grove of Destiny"--a fate that will see them go on to live healthy, wealthy, and moral lives. But Chapter XI is important in that it shows Quick's further modification of the ending of Genesis. In Genesis, Adam and Eve, having yielded to temptation, are visited by the Lord God, Who questions them and then curses them. In Quick's Chapter XI, Cow and Virginia, having (for whatever reasons) not yielded to temptation and having left the Grove of their own free will, are interrogated by the Thorndykes. Although Grandma Thorndyke "scrutinized Virginia's soul and must have found it white as snow" (p. 203), she nevertheless thinks that it might be too risky if Cow and Virginia continue being together unchaperoned, and therefore insists that Virginia stay with her and the Elder. Quick's comment on the myth seems to be that the Lord God ought to have known better than to have thrown a boy and girl

together in a tempting situation. In any case, the separation effected, the "proprieties" defended, Cow and Virginia are further assured of continuing their virtuous roles as the Unfallen Adam and Eve.

This is how Quick wished Genesis had ended, with no fall, but he could not help recognizing, particularly in view of the fallen--or at least falling--state of his contemporary America, the way Genesis did end. He therefore rewrote Genesis in a second way, a way that features a fall; this is to say, he began the story of the fall of America in Vandemark's Folly and completed it in the rest of the Midland Trilogy. Cow Vandemark is in this version of Genesis, too, but it mainly concerns Magnus Thorkelson, Rowena Fewkes, and J. Buckner Gowdy. Also, this story, unlike that of Cow and Virginia, gives a different specification of Original Sin by depicting the Satanic serpent as an intruding third party.

Briefly, this story of the origin of the fall and degeneration of American society³⁶ is as follows. Magnus Thorkelson is Adam. Before the fall, Magnus is depicted as a happy farmer, tending his garden and optimistic of the future, not suspecting that anything could go wrong with his dreams. Moreover, he is Cow's alter ego. When Cow-Adam suffers a momentary lapse of faith in the agricultural

³⁶The aftermath of the fall is the subject of The Invisible Woman, where the "development of the [individual] drama" of Magnus and Rowena and Buck is shown as it relates to "the growth of society" (p. 409).

Eden of Iowa (brought on by the land speculators, the Panic of 1857), it is Magnus-Adam who offers encouragement and restores confidence:

'Oh!' exclaimed Magnus, 'you shouldn't talk so! Ve got plenty to eat. Dere bane lots people in Norvay would yump at de shance to yange places wit' us. What nice land here in Iovay! Some day you bane rich man (p. 304).

Magnus trusts that his own life will be rich, too, and even happier when he marries the girl of his dreams, Rowena Fewkes.

Rowena is Eve. Before the fall, she is described, when young Vandemark first sees her, on the trail west, as having:

. . . in her something akin to the golden plovers that were running in hundreds that morning over the prairies--I haven't seen one for twenty-five years! That is, she skimmed over the little knolls rather than walked, as if made of something lighter than ordinary human clay (p. 133).

Furthermore, the only forewarning evidence that this innocent child of God's nature will suffer the fate of being made into something as burdensomely heavy as "human clay" is the fact that her family, the Fewkes, do not have the proper motive for going west, do not appreciate the true value of the land.³⁷ Before her fall into sinful sex Rowena tries but fails to escape the influence of her family. Had she succeeded, she and Magnus might well have enjoyed an unstained bliss.

³⁷The Fewkes' outlook on the land is explained on pp. 181-182 below.

In Quick's second rewriting of Genesis, Buck Gowdy is the Satanic, serpentine villain. He is described as a "rakehell":

I know that Buckner Gowdy was a wild and turbulent rakehell in Kentucky and after many bad scrapes was forced to run away from the state, and was given his huge plantation of 'worthless' land--as he called it--in Iowa; that he had married his wife, who was a poor girl of good family named Ann Royall, because he couldn't get her except by marrying her (p. 129).

He is associated with the "devil's gang" (p. 129), and when, on the trail west, he confides that he has been "exiled" to Iowa (like Lucifer's being exiled), Doc Bliven immediately indicates that his (Bliven's) medicine will be needed in the same neighborhood (p. 125); and later, in Iowa, Gowdy is associated with "snake-bite" and a devil-may-care attitude, as he has his horses driven

. . . on a keen gallop as if running after a doctor for snake-bite or apoplexy. It was the way Gowdy always went careering over the prairies, killing horses by the score, and laughingly answering criticisms by saying that there would be horses left in the world after he was gone. He said he hadn't time to waste on saving horses . . . (p. 217).

When young Vandemark becomes momentarily stuck in the "mud" on the trail (a mud that suggests human care and pain), it is Gowdy who immediately appears on the scene not actually to help but to state, rather ironically, after Vandemark has freed his own wagon: "If you ever need work, come to my place out in the new Earthly Eden" (p. 152).

When Vandemark first meets J. Buckner Gowdy, on the trail west, the latter is described in a way that recalls

the "Edenic tempter" in Aladdin & Co., J. Bedford Cornish, that city-slicker who had a mustache, a low and vibrant voice, and a penchant for clothes, and who was a seducer or would-be seducer of rural maidens. Also, it is a sign of future developments that Gowdy is first seen in the light of a camp-fire (because his most important victim, Rowena, is later associated with a much larger and more hellish fire) and that he has just returned from hunting and "crawling," like a reptile, through mud:

He wore a little black mustache. . . . His clothes were soaked and gaumed up with mud from his tramping and crawling through the marshes. . . .

When Buck Gowdy spoke, it was always with a little laugh, and that slight stoop toward you as if there was a sort of secret--the kind of laugh a man gives who has had many a joke with you and depends on your knowing what it is that pleases him. His eyes were brown, and a little close together. . . . His voice was rich and deep, and pitched low as if he were telling you something he did not want everybody to hear. He swore constantly, and used nasty language; but he had a way with him which I have seen him use to ministers of the gospel without their seeming to take notice of the improper things he said. There was something intimate in his treatment of every one he spoke to; and he was in the habit of saying things, especially to women, that had all sorts of double meanings. . . . And there was a vibration in his low voice which always seemed to mean that he felt much more than he said.

'My name's Gowdy,' he said; 'all you people going west for your health?' (pp. 123-124).

Moreover, Gowdy is associated with death as much as seduction, as the serpent in Genesis. As the "tragedy" (p. 130) of Ann Royall Gowdy's death draws near, he is in the very process of another seduction:

In five minutes he had begun discussing with a pretty young woman the best way to cook a goose;

and soon wandered away with her on some pretense, and we could hear his subdued, vibratory voice and low laugh from the surrounding darkness, and from time to time her nervous giggle. Suddenly I remembered his wife, certainly very sick in the house, and the talk that she was 'struck with death'--and he out shooting geese, and now gallivanting around with a strange girl in the dark. . . .

He and the girl came to the fire quickly, and as they came into view I saw a movement of his arm as if he was taking it from around her waist (pp. 125-126).

Gowdy boasts of his powers of seduction:

Indeed he gained a certain popularity from his boast that all the time he needed to gain control over any woman was half an hour alone with her . . . (p. 164).

In addition to being associated with the ideas of "rake-hell," "devil's gang," "exile," "snake," "seduction," and "death," and with a previous fictional character whom Quick explicitly called the "Edenic tempter," J. Buckner Gowdy has a policy concerning girls--"there's only one policy for me--lose 'em and forget 'em'" (p. 388)--which yet again brings to mind the serpent in Genesis, since the serpent forgets Eve after he seduces her, or does his part in losing paradise.

The most significant seduction by Buck Gowdy (who, as Grandma Thorndyke says, would be great, a "tower of strength," if he should be brought "under God," p. 320) is that of Rowena Fewkes. When Gowdy first starts this seduction, the narrator makes it clear that its significance--like the far-reaching influence of Satan's in Genesis--"was not to cease in its influence on Iowa affairs for half a century, if ever":

State politics, the very government of the commonwealth, the history of Monterey County and of Vandemark Township, were all changed when Buck Gowdy went off over the prairie that day, holding Rowena Fewkes in the buggy seat with that big brawny arm of his (p. 257).

And, as Rowena becomes the Fallen Eve, Quick's second re-writing of Genesis becomes even clearer: the serpent is a fabulous third person (not a phallic part of Adam), and the Original Sin is not only forbidden sexual activity between two unmarried persons but also adultery, in the Biblical sense of the term adultery. Gowdy was an adulterer before, during, and after his marriage to Ann Royall. Moreover, because he seduces the wife of the overseer of his Blue Grass Manor plantation, Mobley (p. 343), and Rowena Fewkes during the same segment of his career, Rowena becomes an adulteress, too. This is why the narrator compares Rowena (though in only one respect, pregnancy resulting from adultery) to "the girl in Nathaniel Hawthorne's story" of the "scarlet 'A'" (p. 365), and why he speaks of Gowdy as one who broke the "Commandments" (p. 381) of Moses, principally number seven.

As Rowena grows to recognize her role as the Fallen Eve, as a "lost woman," fallen into the "mud" of corrupted humanity, she prays that an unspoiled Adam, Cow Vandemark, will redeem her:

' . . . my folks have throwed me off,' she went on. 'But I ain't bad, Jacob. I ain't bad. Take me, and save me! I'll always be good to you, Jake; I'll wash your feet with my hair! I'll kiss them! I'll eat the crusts from the table an' be glad, for I love you, Jacob. I've loved you ever since I saw

you. If I have been untrue to you, it was because I was overcome, and you never looked twice at me, and I thought I was to be a great lady. Now I'll be mud, trod on by every beast that walks, an' rooted over by the hawgs, unless you save me. I'll work my fingers to the bone f'r you, Jacob, to the bone. You're my only hope. For Christ's sake let me hope a little longer!'

The thought that she was coming to me to save her from the results of her own sin never came into my mind. I only saw her as a lost woman, cast off even by her miserable family, whose only claim to respectability was their having kept themselves from the one depth into which she had fallen (p. 342).

After this adding of conversational details to the slim, symbolic story as given in Moses' Genesis, Quick indicates that Jacob (Cow-Adam) Vandemark reluctantly accepts Rowena's proposal but that he is spared the fate of marrying her not only because his own fate had already been decided but also because she attempts suicide³⁸ and because his alter ego marries her.

When Magnus Thorkelson first learns of the seduction of his Rowena (which took place at Gowdy's Blue Grass Manor, where her family had unwisely hired her out), he confesses that this is the one event that is capable of dampening his optimistic spirit:

³⁸Vandemark does "save" Rowena from suicide and from the great prairie fire, in Chapter XVIII, "Rowena's Way Out--The Prairie Fire." Moreover, it is symbolically appropriate that Rowena is threatened by death in fire, because of her passion in surrendering to Gowdy, the king of hell. It is likewise appropriate that Virginia, the comparatively frigid virgin, is threatened by the great prairie blizzard, from which Vandemark rescues her by taking her into a womblike haystack and then marrying her, in the last chapter, "Just as Grandma Thorndyke Expected."

'Don't that beat you!'
 'Yes,' said Magnus gravely, 'dat beat me,
 Yake' (p. 331).

It is with a shock of recognition that Magnus identifies Rowena's seduction by Gowdy with that by another connoisseur of forbidden 'fruit,' whose prototype could be none other than the Satanic serpent in Genesis, and he makes it clear that the new world of America ought not to tolerate such villainous fruit-eaters:

'Ay know de man! So it vas in de ol' country!
 Rich fallar bane t'inking poor girl notting but
 like fresh fruit for him to eat; a cup of vine for
 him to drink; an' he drink it! He eat de fruit.
 But dis bane different country. Ay keel dis damned
 Gowdy! You hare, Yake? Ay keel him!' (p. 366).

But, instead of killing Buck Gowdy, Magnus marries Rowena, two days after she gives birth, painfully (as Eve), to Owen Lovejoy Gowdy, as Magnus insists the baby be christened (p. 372). And the narrator repeats the idea that the "celebrated Gowdy Case . . . swayed the destiny of the county and the state in after years . . . " (p. 374). Because of Quick's repetitive emphasis on the idea of the long-range significance of the seduction, there can be but little doubt that he was reworking Genesis.

The implications of the "celebrated Gowdy Case"--of one interpretation of the fall as given in Genesis--are developed in the rest of the Midland Trilogy, but in Vandemark's Folly this "Case" serves the purpose of a contrast to what Quick considered the original and legitimate American identity, namely the Unfallen Adam, a farmer who

is innocent and moral because he treats the land just as a virgin woman and then a mother ought to be treated. This American identity and its contrast are further clarified by the pioneers' outlooks on the land in Vandemark's Folly.

One main outlook on the land is Gowdy's. He considers the land worthless except insofar as it can be used for speculating and making money fast. Instead of working the land with his own hands, as a true farmer should, he spends his time politicking with his railroad friends (and the railroad as a micro-macrocosmic image suggests the serpent crawling through the Iowa Eden and therefore buttresses Gowdy's serpentine role) and, of course, seducing unmarried and married females. Moreover, Gowdy's financial gains are "unearned," in the sense that such economists as Henry George considered them unearned:

After a few years the land began to take on what the economists call 'unearned increment,' or community value, and the Gowdy lands began the work which finally made him a millionaire; but it was not his work. It was mine, and Magnus Thor-kelson's, and the work of the neighbors generally . . . (p. 308).

And it is the outlook on the land of Gowdy and people like him which is to be blamed for bringing "panic" to Eden:

The panic of 1857 came on in the summer and fall. . . . It all came from land speculation. . . . All financial panics come from land speculation . . . (p. 299).

Although they do not have the means to be land speculators, the Fewkes family entertains a viewpoint on the land which is similar to Gowdy's. One son of this

family, Celebrate, has various general schemes for making money fast, and another son, Surrager, is obsessed with the specific method of inventions for acquiring quick riches. The father, Old Man Fewkes, will not settle down anywhere, always thinking his present location a "Land o' Desolation" (p. 330) and always dreaming of some never-never land, such as the "mythical state of Negosha"³⁹ or the "Speak":

'We are makin',' said he, 'our big move for riches. Gold! Gold! Jake, you must go with us! We are goin' out to the Speak.'

I had never heard of any place called the Speak, but I finally got it through my head that he meant Pike's Peak. We were in the midst of the Pike's Peak excitement for two or three years; and this was the earliest sign of it that I had seen, though I had heard Pike's Peak mentioned.

'Jake,' said Old Man Fewkes, 'it's a richer spot than the Arabian Knights ever discovered. The streams are rollin' gold sand. Come along of us to the Speak, an' we'll make you rich. Eh, ma?' (pp. 229-330).

In other words, the Fewkes family is governed by the myth of the Passage to India, a myth as old as Christopher Columbus, a myth meaning materialistic riches easily and quickly acquired, and associated with a basically capitalistic psychology.⁴⁰ Even Rowena dreams of a "castle in Spain" (p. 135), having been influenced by her family's values, and this dream makes it easier for Gowdy to seduce her.

In contrast, the favorable designations for the

³⁹p. 251. "Negosha" is a portmanteau for Nebraska and Dakota.

⁴⁰Henry Nash Smith, "Book One: Passage to India," Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950).

western land which accumulate throughout the novel, beginning with "a paradise for a boy . . . heaven . . . God's country" (p. 59)--and ranging through "the Mississippi to the Land of Promise" (p. 106), "Gardens of Eden" (p. 114), "earthy paradise . . . the garden spot of the garden of the world" (p. 214), "virgin sod" (p. 228), "a new world" (p. 229), "Garden of Eden" (p. 261)--and ending with "Mother Earth" (p. 296), are all explained by the other main outlook on the land, that of Vandemark. Unlike Gowdy and the Fewkeses, Vandemark heeds the reminder-warning given on the trail west (by one "old man Evans"):

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," said God to Adam, and when you go to the prairies where it's all ready for the plow, you are trying to dodge God's curse on our first parents. You [Vandemark] won't prosper. It stands to reason that any land that is good will grow trees' (p. 97).

But the young Vandemark, as Unfallen Adam, does go on to prosper, precisely because he does sweat and work, but joyously, not in the sense of a curse; moreover, he finds that trees grow as if by magic in his God-blessed Iowa Eden:

Trees grew like weeds when we set them out; and we set them out as the years passed, by the million. . . . Most of the lofty trees we see in every direction now . . . were planted by the mere sticking in the ground of a wand of the green tree . . . and how they grew! It was no bad symbol of the state itself . . . (pp. 270-271).

The "state itself"--alias Eden--is a "new world":

Surely this was a new world! Surely, this was a world in which a man with the will to do might make something of himself. No waiting for the long processes by which the forests were reclaimed; but a new world with new processes, new neighbors,

new ideas, new opportunities, new victories easily gained (p. 229).

"Easily gained" because Vandemark is the uncursed Adamic farmer, properly dressing and keeping the God-given land (as in Genesis 2); not "easily gained" in the sense of seductive and capitalistic exploitation.

Furthermore, Vandemark-Adam grows happy and prosperous cultivating his farm because he had intuitively realized that he and the land share a moral family kinship (which Ralph Waldo Emerson as well as Moses would have understood and approved); for, after his moral behavior with Virginia in the Grove and after the "proprieties" had been "defended," he comments:

Prior to this time I had been courting the country; now I was to be united with it in that holy wedlock which binds the farmer to the soil he tills. Out of this black loam was to come my own flesh and blood, and the bodies, and I believe, in some measure, the souls of my children. Some dim conception of this made me draw in a deep, deep breath of the fresh prairie air (p. 210).⁴¹

The fact that some cynics, like Gowdy, have designated his farm land "Hell Slew, Alias Vandemark's Folly Marsh" does not deter Vandemark from pursuing his moral and honorable goal of "holy wedlock":

The next day was a wedding-day--the marriage morning of the plow and the sod. It marked the beginning of the subdual of that wonderful wild

⁴¹Virginia Royall and Vandemark are married in the last chapter, almost as an afterthought, and they had children but they are no where named in the Trilogy. It is as though their granddaughter, Gertrude, sprang from "antiseptic earth" or was generated spontaneously.

prairie of Vandemark Township and the Vandemark farm. No more fruitful espousal ever took place than that--when the polished steel of my new breaking plow was embraced by the black soil with its lovely fell of greenery. Up to that fateful moment, the prairie of the farm and the township had been virgin sod; but now it bowed its neck to the yoke of wedlock. Nothing like it takes place any more; for the sod of the meadows and pastures is quite a different thing from the untouched skin of the original earth. Breaking prairie was the most beautiful, the most epochal, and most hopeful, and as I look back at it, in one way the most pathetic thing man ever did, for in it, one of the loveliest things ever created began to come to its predestined end (p. 228).

The "predestined end" is not pessimistic, however; for the reminiscent old Vandemark recognizes that legitimate motherhood is a wholly satisfactory substitute for virginity and that, in a sense, motherhood is even lovelier than virginity and has the blessing of the deity:

Our harvest of that day seems pitifully small as I sit on my veranda and look at my barns and silos, and see the straight rows of corn leaning like the characters of God's handwriting across the broad intervale of Vandemark's Folly flat, sloping to the loving pressure of the steady warm west wind of Iowa, and clapping a million dark green hands in acclamation of the full tide of life sucked up from the richest breast that Mother Earth in all her bountiful curves turns to the lips of her offspring . . . (p. 296).

In Quick's highest ideal, of course, the land would be a Virgin Mother, and Her pure and wholesome products would go forth to save and nourish the rest of the world, the non-American part of the world--in a manner that recalls, in literature, Melville's Captain Delano dutifully carrying a basket of fish which he assumes will cure whatever ails the Spaniard, Benito Cereno, and that recalls,

in politics, the theory of the Marshall Plan.⁴² But Quick does not pursue this important aspect of the American identity--the New Adam, Christ, identity--in Vandemark's Folly.⁴³ Instead, Quick is content in this novel to answer the question--after the virgin land, what?--on the domestic level. This answer is, simply, that the Americans ought not have viewed the land and ought not to continue to view their land as a mere object to seduce, or capitalistically exploit, but rather as a virgin to court and to marry according to the proprieties, and as a mother to love.

The Hawkeye (1923)

The second novel of Quick's Iowa Trilogy is a continuation of the first in several senses. The time is advanced from the 1850's and 1860's (of Vandemark's Folly) to the 1870's and 1880's (of The Hawkeye); and the physical setting is expanded from a township to a county. The same characters (notably Jake and Virginia Vandemark, Magnus and Rowena Thorkelson, Owen Lovejoy Gowdy, and Buck Gowdy) appear in The Hawkeye, but they are kept in the background, and "new" characters take the center of the stage,

⁴²Appropriately, the first shipload of Marshall Plan food ("9,000 tons of wheat") was transported to Europe, in 1948, by a U. S. freighter which had been named in Quick's honor, the John H. Quick; "Twenty Years Later," Time, June 16, 1967, p. 19.

⁴³Quick did, however, suggest this American identity in previous nonfictional works, notably in On Board the Good Ship Earth: A Survey of World Problems (Bobbs-Merrill, 1913).

particularly the McConkey and Ashe families. The autobiography continues. The "momism" continues. Certain symbols recur. The narrative viewpoint is practically the same, the chief differences being that the narrator of The Hawkeye is middle aged (not old), tells the story of his own life in the third (not first) person, and is somewhat less nostalgic. The seeds of corruption planted in Vandemark's Folly begin to grow and take form in The Hawkeye.⁴⁴

A comparison of the structural emphases of Vandemark's Folly and The Hawkeye also shows how these novels overlap. Over nineteen of a total of twenty chapters in Vandemark's Folly are devoted to the story of a boy, a teenager, an unmarried youth. In The Hawkeye, the first three of a total of six "Books" (or nineteen of forty-one titled chapters) show a boy and bachelor hero, and the remainder of the novel deals with the rigors and struggles of his

⁴⁴The narrator of Vandemark's Folly looked forward to the subsequent novels of the Trilogy when he explained that the virgin land had the potentiality for evil, as well as good, development; for example:

"Buck Gowdy, Doctor Bliven, their associates, and others yet to be mentioned will be found helping to make or mar the story all through the future; for an Iowa community was like a growing child in this, that its character in maturity was fixed by its beginnings.

"I know communities in Iowa that went into evil ways, and were blighted through the poison distilled into their veins by a few of the earliest settlers. . . . I knew . . . settlements in which there was a feud from the beginning between the bad and the good; and in some of them the blight of the bad finally overwhelmed the good, while in others the forces of righteousness at last grappled with the devil's gang, and, sometimes in violence, redeemed the neighborhood to a place in the light" (pp. 128-129).

early married life, his parenthood, his search for a meaningful occupation, and his attitude towards his growing maturity.

But the best way to understand The Hawkeye as a continuation, and as a coherent part of the entire Trilogy, is to realize that it represents a further development of the myth as given in Genesis. Vandemark's Folly concentrated on depicting Eden and the Unfallen Adam, while introducing the serpentine forces. The Hawkeye traces the specific manifestations of these forces which could, if unchecked, bring about the loss of paradise. This is not to say that the hero of The Hawkeye, Fremont McConkey, is the Fallen Adam, but that he is in the process of falling, along with the American society he represents. Caught between innocence and the growing corruption of his society, threatened by the loss of his original and legitimate American identity (which, as Vandemark's Folly showed, was an Unfallen Adamic identity), Fremont McConkey is the falling Adam, a transitional Adam.

The story in which Fremont plays this kind of hero may be briefly summarized as follows. Book One shows that the major intellectual influences on the childhood and boyhood of "Freem" are the McGuffey Readers and the melodramatic and romantic fiction that came his way in Monterey County, Iowa. Freem has the ambition of becoming a writer, of imitating what he has read, but various factors in his environment seem to stand in the way. Book Two treats

Freem's romantic attractions to such girls as Dorinda and ends when his "boyhood had passed away" (p. 134). In Book Three Fremont is led from his literary ambition into the arena of practical politics, and also to the Teachers' Institute, where he--"still only a dreamy clodhopper" (p. 190)--hopes to develop some aspect of his intellect. In Book Four Fremont courts Winifred Ashe and finally marries her; their beginnings in married life are described. In this Book, too, there is explicit propaganda against land speculators; and the coming election captures the attention of the political, not literary, minded citizens of Monterey. In Book Five Captain Ashe, Winifred's father and clerk of the court, dies of an accidental gunshot wound, but there are rumors of murder and financial scandal. Winifred dies after giving birth to Fremont's second child. (The fact that death is much more present in this novel than in Vandemark's Folly is yet another indication that Quick was continuing the story as given in Genesis, since in Genesis death is identified with man's fall and since The Hawkeye is about the process of man falling.) Fremont studies the law, under N. V. Creede, and then takes Captain Ashe's job as clerk. In Book Six Fremont follows his mother's advice to marry his sister-in-law, Catherine Ashe. Also, Fremont learns to see that his former enemy and present brother-in-law, Paul Holbrook (May Ashe's husband), is right in prosecuting the county "boodlers." Toward the end, two of the notorious Bushyager gang are murdered by a mob of

frustrated agrarians, who break into the jail where the Bushyagers were held. Fremont himself almost falls victim to this mob law, being saved by the intervention of Owen Lovejoy Gowdy in his behalf. The novel ends with the "disclosure of the fact that," as Quick said in a letter, "the tale is written by Fremont McConkey himself, as his final effort to break into literature."⁴⁵

In this story, it can be seen that the major concerns of Fremont are his family, literature, and politics. The present analysis therefore intends to proceed by focusing on these three topics (which are of course interwoven throughout the novel) and explaining how each reveals Fremont as the transitional Adam.

First of all, Fremont has a family. Unlike "Cow" Vandemark, who was 'born' of the virgin prairie and remained parentless in the usual sense, Fremont has a father and mother, Alvin and Kate McConkey, who see him through his childhood and remain available to give him help when he subsequently needs it. Without the sort of virginal birth associated with Cow Vandemark, Fremont was practically predestined to play the role of Adam falling.

Even before Fremont is born, in Iowa, there are ominous signs that he will have his troubles in the would-be Eden of Iowa and perhaps be led astray from the good life of farming. In Book One, Chapter I, "Coming Events Cast

⁴⁵H. Quick to D. L. Chambers, December 7, 1822 [1922], in the Bobbs Papers.

Shadows," the narrator asserts that Fremont "was made or marred--it was long hard to tell which--by events that took place before he was born--but not long before" (p. 3). The ominous events are the "bran bread" which the McConkey family had to eat, instead of flour-made bread, because of the hard times and panic that gripped the nation in 1857 as a result of the villainous land speculation; the "dreadful winter" weather of 1856-57; and the "Spirit Lake Massacre" of March 1857 (pp. 3-5). All these signs--which are merely portents, not causes producing effects--are intended to suggest that 1857 was decidedly not a good year for Fremont to be born.

Fremont's parents are good, hard-working farmers, faithful tillers of the soil; but when they are forced, because of failure to pay the mortgage, to move into the growing town, Monterey Center, and then when they scrape up the means to move back to the comparatively Edenic life on the farm, they provide a sort of double model for a mode of life and re-enforce the idea of their son's being a transitional Adam, for Fremont becomes caught between the life of the town and life on the farm. He is "caught" because he feels guilty about his choice of working in town, in the clerk's office, instead of on the farm:

. . . he was always conscious of a little feeling of guilt, as if he were shirking a duty. When he rose long after sunrise, he had this sensation of guilt. He should have been in the field long since! (p. 293).

Moreover, the narrator makes it clear that Fremont, a representative American during this period of the nation's history, has a God-given, God-blessed, Adamic impulse to tend the Garden but that the influence of the growing and "wicked" town life has unfortunately modified this impulse and made it seem "ridiculous" or "absurd" (at the end of the following passage, the narrator echoes the phrasing of this important idea as he gave it in The Brown Mouse, pp. 204-205):

As the town grew under the influence of its boom from the building of the second railway, and the rumors that new lines were coming in to get the advantage of the traffic of the new trade center which was growing up, the thrashing-machine music seldom penetrated into the little city, but on still autumn mornings it did so occasionally for a year or so, and Fremont never heard it but he felt that little absurd twinge of conscience that he would be late to work. The fragrance of the new-turned furrows disturbed him somewhat. The waves of shadow on the ripening wheat called him as to some task shirked. The whispering maize of July, as it stood in straight rows, its burgeoning stalks slanting in the prairie breeze, seemed to say to him 'We are the green hosts of that God who dropped manna for His children's sustenance. Why are you not marching with us, softening the bed for our roots, freeing us from the spies, deserters and traitors of the weeds, giving drink to our lips through the water you hold for us in the cups of your furrows? Are you also turned against us?' He would smile at the ridiculousness of it. I wonder whether in that ominous desertion of the soil which our world has seen in its steady, and, I sometimes suspect, fundamentally wicked industrialization, the human race has not suffered a shock to its collective conscience of which Fremont McConkey's queer little trouble is typical? (p. 294).

To be sure, Fremont returns to his family's farm but only to visit briefly or to seek his mother's advice.

Once returning to the farm he "had broken away

from . . . in a manner unprecedented in the McConkey family" (p. 134), Fremont brings a "peace offering" (p. 127) of some fish, which are symbolic of the bountiful food of an Eden in danger of being spoiled or lost:

'Back at last,' said she [his mother], as he entered.

'Yeah,' said he. 'Everybody asleep?'

'I guess so,' she said. 'We mustn't wake 'em up. What in time've you got there!'

He displayed a fine string of fish.

' . . . I was afraid the fish would spoil, but they're all right. I'll have to clean and salt 'em right off, though.' . . .

She praised the fish, and agreed with him that they were still good, and said they would surely be a treat for the whole family . . . (p. 127).

Later, after suffering personal disasters and the various ills begotten by town life, when Fremont loses the strength to return to the farm, the farm, in the form of his mother, visits him and administers to his weakened spirit an Edenic refreshment, a much-needed "healing":

One night Mrs. McConkey could not sleep. She arose and walked about the house in her slippers. . . . She passed and repassed her son's door very silently, and finally she noiselessly pushed it open and went in. He was lying on his side . . . and seemed asleep; but as she softly stopped and silently stood over him, he turned his face upward, and when he saw her he put out his hand. She took him in her arms as she had done when he was a baby, wiped away his tears, and without a word, held him for a long time until with the same long-drawn, quivering sighs with which he had been used to go off to sleep when a child, he lapsed into slumber. She laid his head on the pillow, kissed him softly on the brow and left him. . . . When Fremont did not rise for breakfast, his mother said that he must not be called, and word was taken to the office by May that he would not come before noon, and might not be in the office that day. All day he slept, and all night; and when late the second morning he came down to breakfast, a complete day had dropped

out of his memory. But his healing had taken place. . . .

He never knew how to thank his mother for what she did that night. Reverently, but with knowledge that there are no words to express the inexpressible, he does so now (pp. 357-358).

Fremont's role as a transitional American Adam is also pointed up by his brother. Unlike Fremont, Henry McConkey stays on the farm, thereby illustrating the "division of diverse destinies" of these brothers who had shared a boyhood next to God's nature (p. 341). Moreover, Henry's role in the story helps to identify his family with the ideal Vandemarks, an identity that began back when

Mrs. Vandemark, the aristocratic Kentucky lady . . . had boarded with Mrs. McConkey when she was a schoolteacher before she was married, and not only thought Mrs. McConkey a wonderful woman . . . but she fell in love with Henry when he was a little chap (p. 340).

For Henry, as a big boy, "had married the oldest Vandemark girl" (a daughter of Jake and Virginia), thereby insuring the "alliance between the McConkey and Vandemark families" (p. 340), both of which are families of Edenic farmers. But Fremont McConkey, unlike Henry, is the farm boy who attempts the transformation into city boy; and this includes his courting of a town girl, not a farm girl.

Winifred is Fremont's town girl. She is one of the three daughters of the widowed Captain Ashe, county clerk. Because Fremont had used his influence with the farmers to help get Captain Ashe elected, the Captain allows Fremont to board at his home in Monterey, where Fremont hopes to acquire a formal education to help him become a writer or

whatever he later decides to become (as a transitional figure, he has more than one alternative). It is in Monterey that Fremont begins his education and transformation, and it is at the Ashe home there that he becomes better acquainted with Winifred.

When Winifred Ashe and Fremont McConkey realize that they are in love, the narrator describes their emotion as if they inhabited some unspoiled world of Edenic plenty:

Babes in the woods, they were, a wood in which there were no wild beasts, but only green lawns in sunny glades, a cottage by the stream, and a life of rapture in a world of success and plenty (p. 211).

Winifred seems to share the romantic feelings of Fremont and seems to approve his wish to become a writer of romances, especially salable ones, but she encourages even more the immediately practical goal of his acquiring a teacher's certificate. In fact, when they go to register at the Teachers' Institute, "Winifred led the way. She was younger than Fremont, but she took the lead as a 'city broke' horse might do with a colt from the pastures" (p. 197).

Furthermore, the 'city breaking' of the Adamic boy from the pastures manifests itself in the matter of clothes. Fremont anticipates the embarrassment he will surely feel if Winifred, when she straightens up his room in the Ashe town house, should happen to discover the fact that he has no nightshirt (p. 192). And then

. . . there was the matter of cuffs. . . . The cuffs to Fremont's white shirts, of which he had the ample number of three, were mere wristbands (pronounced 'rizbans') and did not show below his coat sleeves. He was sure that the town fellows had some other device. He planned to lay in wait in some barber shop to find out, but in the physiology class at the Institute one day, the problem was made plain. The instructor in making some demonstration, removed his coat, and then took off his cuffs! Within a day Fremont had bought a supply of cuffs at the general store . . . (p. 193).

In Genesis, Adam is shamed, as one result of losing Eden, into wearing at least a fig leaf; in Quick's version here, Fremont is shamed, as one result of leaving the farm and being lured by the "civilized" town, into wearing the most proper or stylish clothes. He does not wish to appear as a "savage" or to be nakedly embarrassed in Winifred's eye-- "Rather drop to the nether hell of oblivion in Winifred's mind than to be rated as such a savage!" (p. 193). Significantly enough, Fremont's courtship of Winifred leads, not to a church wedding (with family and friends present) nor to the other extreme of completely unsanctioned or Gowdy-like sexual union, but rather to an elopement to a justice of the peace, an elopement which, in the view of the narrator of Vandemark's Folly and The Hawkeye, is decidedly a compromise of the "proprieties."

More evidence that shows Fremont as the transitional or falling Adam (in the process of losing the proprieties as well as his agricultural Eden) comes after he is married to Winifred. Their married life is fraught with struggle and pain. Fremont tries various jobs--

schoolteaching, studying law and clerking, writing, and even farming--but he never earns enough money to enable him and Winifred to purchase a home of their own anywhere. When Winifred gives birth to their first child, she is explicitly like Eve experiencing the first pain associated with the losing of Eden; and Fremont, recognizing himself as the falling Adam, revolts against the archetypal decree set forth in Genesis:

He revolted against the decree of nature or of God which imposed these agonies on the mothers. . . . was it a just God who had condemned Adam to a contention with thistles and sterility in the soil only, but had sentenced Eve to this sorrow in bringing forth? (pp. 310-311).

The "moans began" (p. 311) for Fremont and Winifred, just as they did for Adam and Eve in Genesis, and these wails are heightened when the birth of their second child actually hastens the death of Winifred.

The role of Fremont's father-in-law also suggests, not by a direct parallelism to Genesis but by a family association, that Fremont is the falling Adam. Captain Ashe not only prefers to live in town (instead of the Edenic country) but also is a member of the county "Ring," a group of "boodlers" (corrupt politicians, graft takers). Although not an unequivocal villain, Captain Ashe does accept free railroad passes (p. 299) and the unethical political obligation that accompanies such acceptance, and he does drink rather too much alcohol, perhaps being driven to it by his association with the growing corruption of town life

(p. 336). And there are suggestions that, just before his death, Ashe was losing his sanity (pp. 343, 345). When Ashe does die--specifically of an accidental gunshot wound while hunting alone but generally of the corruption of town politics--there are rumors that he either committed suicide or was murdered because of a scandal involving bank funds. As far as Fremont is concerned, the narrator makes it clear enough that Ashe is not an ideal father-in-law. (And again it should be kept in mind that the contrast of Cow Vandemark, of the Unfallen Adam, clarifies the role in the Trilogy of Fremont as the falling Adam: the ideal Cow had no father-in-law at all--and no mother-in-law either.)

Owen Lovejoy Gowdy is a part neither of Fremont's farm family nor his town family, in this novel, but the illegitimate son of Buck Gowdy is so closely associated with Fremont that no analysis of The Hawkeye would be adequate without drawing attention to this identity. Owen is early mistaken for Fremont; and: "Sally [a schoolgirl] explained . . . by shouting . . . that this was not Owen Gowdy, the fiddler . . . but Freem McConkey" (p. 171). Later, Fremont supports Owen's candidacy for a job in the courthouse, saying, "'I guess I'm as close to him as any man in the county'" (p. 330). Owen is "best man" at Fremont's wedding and: Fremont and Owen work side by side as clerks, Owen sometimes actually taking Fremont's place, as for example on an errand:

Catherine [Ashe] from the back window saw Owen Gowdy run the buggy out of its shed, and hitch Fremont's horse to it. Why did not Fremont come himself? . . . but perhaps Owen was the one who meant to use the horse. . . .

. . . said Catherine. 'Where's Fremont?'

'I wonder if you'd give me his heavy overcoat,' said Owen. 'He's up at the office; but he's going out to his mother's he told me to tell you, and may not be back tonight.'

Slowly Catherine went into the front hall for the coat, very slowly she brought it to Owen and handed it to him . . . (p. 386).

The transitional Adam was becoming as much of a bastardized American as anything else, a point that Quick had introduced in the first novel and further developed in the third novel of the Trilogy.

In The Hawkeye, as the transitional hero becomes involved in town life, he becomes more and more conscious of its corrupting influences and his Adamic struggle against these influences, which manifest themselves not only in a less-than-ideal family life but also in politics. Fremont's first glimpse of the political situation occurs when he attends a Fourth of July celebration, held in "Crabapple Grove" (a significant designation in light of the trouble-yielding fruit tree in Genesis). In this fateful grove, Fremont hears the reasons for agrarian discontent in 1874, as for example when a farmer confronts a hostile Governor Wade:

Governor, you should not wonder at this discontent. Not to see it would be a wonder; for here on this Iowa prairie you are taking part in the first great experiment in the building of a democracy based on ponderous production and deprived of the sea as a highway. You are trying the experiment for the first time of keeping a

people economically free while living an industrial and agricultural life and dependent on highways made by man instead of those created by nature. And to the inherent difficulty of the problems presented in this experiment, if you will look over into the wheat-field there just beyond the burr-oaks, you will see in the rust and smut and blight another obvious reason why the Monterey County farmers, on this Fourth of July, 1874, may be expected to come in no very contented spirit. There is the threat of grasshoppers, too, in this west wind. . . . Try to remember, too, that these people are in deep distress, and in poverty, in debt with no means of paying, and that they wonder and wonder why, work as they may --and they all work--they are poorer after each year of slavish labor. Think of these things, and you may be able to overlook the legends:

'AS CITIZENS WE FAVOR THE ANTI-MONOPOLY CONVENTION.'

'AS GRANGERS WE KNOW NO PARTY.' (p. 99).

Grasshoppers and blight on the wheat, threatening poverty in the richest soil in the world, transportation difficulties, railroads and the lack of a natural waterway, monopolists and land speculators--all these are the villainous factors that lead to political corruption in Monterey County.

In other words, these factors represent the growth of evil in Eden. The narrator relates them to Buck Gowdy and Rowena Fewkes's Original Sin, which was explained in Vandemark's Folly. In The Hawkeye, even grasshoppers are related to that Original Sin: for in Book Two, Chapter VI, "Hopper-Gazing in Lithopolis," it is an expert gazer at sun-spots, Owen Lovejoy Gowdy, who makes the "original" identification of the dreaded grasshoppers, which, like Owen himself, are yet another manifestation of the losing of Eden, of the Lord God's curse, of the coming of Judgment

Day. Moreover, in the following illustrative passage, Fremont McConkey is shown again as the transitional Adam, not only because he is again closely associated with Owen but also because he, too, is probably a part of the "moral heritage":

'Calamity,' said Uncle Steve [Fremont's uncle, Steve Lawless]. 'Day o' jedgment, you know. How's all the folks, Fremont? Didn't know you was in this part o' the moral heritage.'

'There goes two,' said a boy about Fremont's age [Owen Lovejoy Gowdy] who held a violin case in one hand, while he shaded his eyes with the other and scanned the edge of the sun. 'And there's another--and another!' . . .

'We'll be as full of 'em by night,' said Upright, looking at Owen's violin case, 'as hell is full of fiddlers.'

'Or horse-jockeys an' men that take county contracts,' retorted Owen, 'an' that's fuller yet' (pp. 116-117).

As Upright and Owen suggest, the loss of the Iowa Eden and the substitute establishment of hell will be marked by the coming of as many illegitimate children as the equally dreaded grasshoppers, by devil-may-care people like Buck Gowdy (who, it will be recalled from Vandemark's Folly, jockeyed horses to death as well as seduced females), and by people like the ironically named Upright, who "take" unethical contracts from the railroad men and the land speculators, and who play a key role in the growing political corruption by becoming members of the county "Ring."

It was "by degrees" that county politics became "corrupt" (p. 284). Quick's explanation of this development, which is rather wordily repeated throughout much of

the novel, may be summarized as follows. In the first place, the settlers considered the non-resident land owner and speculator as a villain even more evil than the grasshoppers or blight because this villain, being invisible, was the most difficult to fight. Indeed, there seemed no way to do so until certain county officials devised the scheme of taxing the non-resident heavily, in order to build roads, schools, bridges, and otherwise to improve the property in the county. The settlers supported this policy heartily, but when they saw that few of the promised roads or bridges were actually constructed and when, too, they were taxed more and more, they began to recognize that their elected officials were nothing but thieves. Moreover, such officials as "Raws" Upright (who is likened to the devil, p. 354) and even Captain Ashe (a member of the Ring whose death saved him from becoming as politically corrupt as some of the others) took additional "boodle" from selected land speculators and from the railroad company.

Fremont McConkey's "immersion" in politics is quite typical of the American experience in this regard and further shows him as the transitional Adam. At first, this innocent, unsuspecting, Adamic boy from the country pastures supports the activities of Captain Ashe, and even after Paul Holbrook initiates the prosecution of the "boodlers" Fremont still remains loyal to his father-in-law. But then Fremont grows "bewildered" and

. . . lost in the confusion of county affairs; a confusion growing out of the existence of a well organized group of men, spending taxes paid at first by non-residents in the main, and levied on a community which had not had time to become knit into a body politic for the rest, and under the worst system of government ever devised, the county government of America (p. 303).⁴⁶

The final stage of Fremont's political experience comes when (like the Biblical Adam learning, with a blush, the existence of good and evil) he learns that there is definitely evil in county affairs and that Paul Holbrook is good and right to prosecute such evil. Moreover, the narrator defends the political phase of his transitional Adamic hero:

It was all a mass of rottenness! Fremont blushed to think that he had been befooled and deceived by these clumsy scoundrels for so long. He found no excuses for himself, though other people in time found them in plenty. In time, the public came to see, as some of his friends then saw, that he had been an ignorant farmer boy, drawn into the unsavory mess of local politics, not only when it was not known to be so filled with vileness, but at a time when he himself was incapable of seeing its seamy side, and at a time when he was devoid of experience and without political standards--when, in fact, the community was so new and so lacking in social cohesiveness as to be itself lacking in standards (p. 413).

After learning of the political evil, Fremont "quits" (Book Six, Chapter V, "Fremont Quits") his job as county clerk (which position the Ring had helped elect him to, to fill the vacancy created by the death of Captain

⁴⁶Quick made the same complaint in his nonfictional article, "New Kind of County Government," National Municipal League (1925), and also proposed, in this article, the solution of a streamlined "executive" type of county government, a solution he also suggested in The Hawkeye.

Ashe). His dissociation from politics is almost too late because the frustrated mob of agrarians which breaks into the jail and murders two of the Bushyagers almost vents its anger on Fremont, too, in blind revenge for the growing corruption, the losing of Eden. Instead of falling victim to the murderous mob--which of course would be, if effected, too complete and final a fall for a transitional Adamic hero--Fremont (with the help of Owen Gowdy) saves his own neck and (near the end of the novel) looks forward to taking up a vocation he had contemplated since his childhood, the vocation of writing literature.

At an early age Fremont is attracted to the mystery of words and the world of literature. When, for example, he begins school and his zealous study of the McGuffey Readers, he weaves "magic" around the word PREFACE, in order to master it:

'Peter Rice Eats Fish, Alligators Catches Eels,
Eels Catches Alligators, Fish Eats Raw Potaters'
(p. 30).

And when he reads Irving, Longfellow, Dickens, Homer, Pope, Hawthorne, Cooper, Tennyson (his favorite poet), and the "many-hued romances" of lesser known authors that come his way in such magazines as Our Young Folks ("perhaps the best magazine ever enjoyed by the youth of America," p. 57), they open "to him a fairy-land, a new heaven and a new earth" (p. 69).

This romantic literature is important because it helps to establish Fremont as an Adamic boy, who becomes

less Adamic as he grows away from such innocent literature. Before the process of falling begins, Fremont is greatly influenced by this Edenic literature; it provides models for him to imitate. For example, when as a youth of seventeen Fremont feels romantic impulses for schoolgirl Dorinda -- "a current of impulses which began with Adam" (p. 67)--he

. . . framed many fervid and moving declarations of love, modeled, with improvements, on passages from the works of Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth . . . and other love specialists (p. 68).

And when Fremont bares "his soul to Winifred" by telling her of his secret ambition of becoming a writer, it is clear that the romantic literature provides a model not only for Fremont's artistic endeavors but for his (and Winifred's) actual behavior as well:

The 'neatheard' was baring his soul to Winifred. He showed her his poems, most of them fragments which would remind you of bits of Pollok or Young, or sometimes, Cowper. I suppose the old McGuffey's Fifth Reader--the one which had so much in it, including passages from translations of Homer--contained his models. . . .

These writings seemed to Winifred very wonderful. To have them exhibited to her, read to her, by this strange, attractive boy, whom she had held in her mind since the day he had taken her into his buggy along the road to Crabapple Grove, to whom her tender fancies had clung after she had heard him promise to help her father . . . who had now discovered to her his 'Swan's Nest among the Reeds,' the great secret of his ambitions which nobody else dreamed of; and who had written her this beautiful poem, just as poets did in romances she had read! . . .

For the first time in his life Fremont . . . kissed a girl on the mouth. In his fancy he had reveled in kisses and embraces, in loves which were made up of just such communion of souls as this, culminating in just such caresses. . . . They were lost in their new-found ecstasy . . . (pp. 209-211).

As the various other problems, associated with the losing of Eden, develop, Fremont tries to escape back into his world of romantic literature:

It was only while he was a pirate, or a knight, or an explorer, or an Indian fighter, or a youth winning his way up to the hand of the banker's daughter, or a boy gold digger or something of the sort, that he had been spiritually free from the economic pressure and the social blight which a poet feels in an atmosphere of ignorance and wheat disease and low prices and lack of fuel for the kitchen stove and the spirit (p. 229).

But he finds it progressively difficult to escape. The family and political-economic problems become too demanding. The romances he writes--so that he and his newly acquired wife, Winifred, can go to some "South Sea Island and live a life of uninterrupted dalliance" (p. 296)--are rejected by the publishers.

Being drawn more and more into a practical world--highlighted by his growing family responsibilities and participation in county politics--the transitional Adamic hero seems forced to read a different kind of literature, such as Kent's Commentaries, Chitty on Pleading, Wharton's Criminal Law, Blackstone, and other dry law books (p. 373). Also, Fremont thinks more and more of writing a propagandistic, utilitarian literature, instead of Edenic romances. He thinks of writing about "rural slums" and actually begins a book, entitled A Study of County Government (p. 414), intended to reform the corrupt political situation.

Yet, even while Fremont is depicted as one who goes



from romance to propaganda, the romantic elements are never completely lost. When he writes a propagandistic verse for the editor of the Monterey Journal, Dick McGill (the Mr. Dooley of Monterey County), Fremont does so in imitation of a romantic poet, Edgar Allan Poe, calling his verse "Chestnut Bells" and signing it "By 'The Granger Bard'" (p. 324). Also, as the ideal state--which is called Camelot as well as Eden--is shown in the process of being lost, passages from Tennyson's version of the Arthurian romance are quoted to make the point clear; for example:

Passages from his favorite poet rang through
his [Fremont's] mind--that cry of Sir Bedivere
to King Arthur:

'But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world:
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years
Among new men, strange faces, other minds!'
(p. 396).

To understand Fremont's attitudes toward romance and reform propaganda--the happy luxury of the first and the hard necessity of the second--is to understand that mixture of the two in much of Quick's previous fiction, particularly in Aladdin & Co.: A Romance of Yankee Magic, The Broken Lance, and Virginia of the Air Lanes, as well as in The Hawkeye.

In The Hawkeye, then, Fremont struggles against the various factors--on the family, political, and literary levels--which signify the losing of Eden. His role as a transitional Adam is, moreover, perfectly clear in the light of the values expressed in Vandemark's Folly. Cow Vandemark possessed a simplicity and unity from which



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Fremont departs: Cow had one wife (Virginia) and one occupation (farming); Fremont leaves the farm, marries twice, and tries on, for size as it were, multiple occupational identities in the town's maze of possibilities, including writer of romances, teacher, lawyer, county clerk, journalist, and, more briefly, insurance salesman. These attempts at various occupations are, furthermore, not notably successful, as farming was successful for Vandemark, because Fremont does not remain faithful to any one of them; but it should be noted that Fremont does attain one curiously significant victory, for when he marries Catherine--who, before her father's death, is constantly depicted as the mother figure in the Ashe household; who, after her father's and Winifred's deaths, mothers Fremont's two children; and who is vigorously supported by Fremont's own mother to continue raising those two children--he marries, in effect, a virgin mother--who takes the place of Fremont's mother as a source of encouragement during the losing of Eden.

In the last analysis, The Hawkeye is the story of a simple, Adamic "clodhopper" who is confronted and bewildered by the growing complexity and corruption of "civilized" life and who is frustrated in his battle against the growing multiplicity of a modern, urbanized American society. Fremont McConkey is an example of that kind of person whom R. W. Emerson saluted:

Here's for the plain old Adam, the simple
genuine self against the whole world.⁴⁷

In one of his several letters which discussed possible titles for this second novel of the Trilogy, Quick indicated that he had in mind the same Adamic confrontation of the world:

Dear Chambers:

Another idea has occurred to me with reference to our title. The novel is really the story of a continuing struggle of a typical personality with the conditions of a great era of opportunity--for other sorts of personalities. McConkey was always a struggler with conditions. This struggle still goes on all over America between the dreamers, the visionaries and the poets, and a materialistic age. Would not a title which carries a hint of this underlying idea be the thing for the book? I have thought of a title which does this through a legal form--making McConkey's life a long litigation with his environment. Like this:

McConkey vs His Era
McConkey vs Things, et al.
McConkey vs The Common Lot
McConkey vs The World
McConkey vs Fate
McConkey vs Destiny
McConkey vs Obstacles
McConkey vs Everything
McConkey vs Environment.

Or perhaps it would be better to reverse the names of plaintiff and defendant, thus:

Fate vs McConkey
Destiny vs McConkey
Things et al. vs McConkey
Environment vs McConkey

⁴⁷R. W. B. Lewis, The American Adam, p. vi,
quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson, Journals.

These suggestions may not look good when they get cold, but just now they interest me. . . .⁴⁸

The last paragraph of The Hawkeye (a title the publishers practically insisted upon) suggests yet another title and makes a final comment on the intended theme; this paragraph is "dictated" by Fremont's encouraging wife, Catherine:

'He is all wrong about having failed as a writer! He [Fremont] has just begun. He has been growing in power all the time. He offers this book which you are now reading, as the first fruits of his powers. He calls it "The History of Monterey County," but I think a better name for it would be "The Education of Fremont McConkey"' (p. 477).

This parting reference to The Education of Henry Adams, an autobiography Quick had read shortly before writing his own story, buttresses the theme of the losing of Edenic simplicity and unity; for as Henry Adams searched the maze of the modern world's multiplicity, wondering what had happened to the great simplicity of his beloved Middle Ages, with its unifying symbol of the Virgin Mother, so did Herbert Quick chronicle the growing complexity and bastardization mainly begotten by the "citifying" of America, wondering whether a hero from the pre-Civil War, Vandemarkian and innocent, Adamic days could survive.

The Invisible Woman (1924)

The relationships among the characters in this third novel are more complicated, as Quick continues to "settle

⁴⁸H. Quick to D. L. Chambers, November 26, 1922, in the Bobbs Papers.

up" Monterey County and the State of Iowa, and advances the time to the 1890's. Here the central family is that of Magnus and Rowena (Fewkes) Thorkelson, whose children are named Virginia, Hilda, Sherman, Vandemark, and Christina Thorkelson, and Owen Lovejoy Gowdy (the illegitimate son of Rowena and J. Buckner Gowdy). The other characters--such as N. V. Creede, who began as an altruistic and helpful lawyer in Vandemark's Folly, but who became progressively corrupt as a member of the county "Ring" in The Hawkeye, and then, in The Invisible Woman, as a shyster in control of the political "machine" in Iowa; Carrie Hanna, Creede's secretary and second wife of Magnus Thorkelson; attorney Oliver Silverthorn and his crazy wife Vivien; inventor-capitalist Uncle Surajah Fewkes; old Jake Vandemark and his wife Virginia; editor Fremont McConkey and his wife Catherine (Ashe); attorney Paul Holbrook and his wife May (Ashe); court-reporter Frank Fox; and Jim Scott, the journalist with literary ambitions--are all related in one way or another to the Thorkelsons, and deal particularly with Christina and her half brother Owen Lovejoy Gowdy.

These characters, Christina and Owen, are central to understanding the main plot. Wanting to escape the small farm community that knows all about the stain on her family so undeniably embodied in Owen Lovejoy Gowdy, Christina goes to the city where she can be unnoticed if not anonymous, working in the law office of Creede, Silverthorn, & Boyd, and becoming the "invisible woman" (p. 433) who

observes the secret and powerful manipulations that made Iowa's history. Quick's crucial example of this political and legal skulduggery has to do with the consequence of the past corruption of Rowena Fewkes; for when (in The Invisible Woman) the millionaire-capitalist J. Buckner Gowdy is killed by a prize bull at the County Fair, the question arises as to whether Owen should inherit Blue Grass Manor and the Monterey Bank and other property of the deceased, or whether Buck Gowdy's relatives back in Kentucky should get it all.

N. V. Creede, who had been gathering evidence even before old Gowdy died and who starts the legal action even before the old man is buried, takes the case of the financially poor Owen, in the hope of getting one half of the estate as his exorbitant fee. Creede wins in the detailed, subtle, and impressive court scenes, but the case of Gowdy vs. Gowdy is appealed to the State Supreme Court. Meanwhile, the love story of Christina and Oliver Silverthorn develops; after Oliver leaves Creede's law firm to become a circuit judge with the dream of becoming a supreme court judge, and after Oliver's wife is adjudged insane, committed to an institution, and after she finally dies, Christina and Oliver look forward to marriage. A subplot is that of Uncle Surajah, whose capitalistically motivated invention (described in Chapter XIII, "The Farm Gate to Paradise") does not solve the problem of what the people should do after the land boom was over; Surajah's capitalistic scheme does not usher in prosperity--though it was a good try,

it does not regain Eden.

After the virgin land, what? This question, again, helps to understand the cultural and mythic themes of another Quick novel. Frank Fox gives the answer of seeking out yet another virgin frontier when he tells of the "land of opportunity" in his "tales of the West" (p. 192); but Fox, who receives little attention in the story, did not stay out west; it must not have been a wholly satisfactory answer. Christina also wishes, early in the story (p. 53), to escape the curse on her family by going farther west, but she too ends up having to face the consequences of the losing of Eden, the complexities and corruption of a growing civilization.

Quick believed that this corruption was a result of the movement of American culture from farm to town to city, and he clarified his belief in the third novel of the Midland Trilogy. For the benefit of those readers who may not have read the previous two novels, and in order to help make a unity of the Trilogy, Rowena in The Invisible Woman is allowed to retell her story of past seduction (to Virginia Royall Vandemark and to Christina) just before she dies (pp. 82-83). The omniscient narrator suggests that what he considers the immoral and corrupt present of American society stemmed, symbolically, from that past immoral act of Rowena and Buck, making the reminder that Virginia Royall had past glory, as did others in the Edenic beginning, but that for most of these characters the romantic

"glamor had faded into the light of [the] common day" of the realistic, citified present (p. 223). The passing of the old prairie is also reported by Christina: "'I wish Owen could have been here,' said she, 'or Fremont McConkey. They are always bemoaning the passing away of the old prairie'" (p. 415).

If the transitional second novel of the Trilogy is set aside a moment for the purpose of contrast, then Quick's imagined view of what happened to Eden will be clear; for the difference between the first and third novels is sharp on this point. The difference between the world of Vandemark's Folly, with its wide-open spaces, and The Invisible Woman, with its stuffy rooms, is like jumping from Tolstoy's War and Peace into Dostoevski's Crime and Punishment. The Invisible Woman suggests going into the human mind and, in so doing, gives another example of corruption.

Vivien Silverthorn has such a passion for her husband Oliver that she drives herself insane. Her "passion for the monopolistic possession of him" (p. 208) develops from an "amatory" or "persecutory" paranoia--from her romantic wish to have her husband alone on some South Sea Island (p. 343)--into a full-blown delusion of grandeur that she is the "Empress of the Americas" (Chapter XXIV). If Quick had been playful or humorous in his treatment of the romantic Sawyerish capitalists possessed of "psychic force" in Aladdin & Co., this is not the case in his investigation of the mind of Vivien Silverthorn. Finally, this poor

wretch even imagines that her keepers were trying to poison her, and her desperate escape from the institution confining her leads only to her death, not salvation, despite the heroic efforts of Christina to save her.

The images of evil, disease, or corruption in relation to N. V. Creede's political power are given by Carrie Hanna, who is in a position to know the inside story and who wants to leave her job at the law firm. "The atmosphere has become poison to me!" she exclaims (p. 236), and when questioned by the initiate Christina, she explains:

'Well, . . . poison is a strong word; but since I have talked so much with Magnus, I see that the firm is just a great spider with its web covering the state. It makes a farce of our system of democratic government' (p. 236).

Carrie explains specifically how General Weaver had lost the gubernatorial nomination (in 1875) to the "old War Governor" S. J. Kirkwood, who had been "seduced" by the "saloons and breweries and the corporations," which forces also "seduced" the delegates to the nominating convention (p. 237). Christina reports that her Uncle Jake Vandemark saw the entire affair as an expression of "enthusiasm . . . a classic episode in our history"--

'Yes,' said Carrie, 'and like many classic tales, it is a myth in part. I know what happened. The Spiders in their webs knew that General Weaver had them beaten. He had a majority of the convention. But the men who beat him were the Spiders . . . (p. 237).

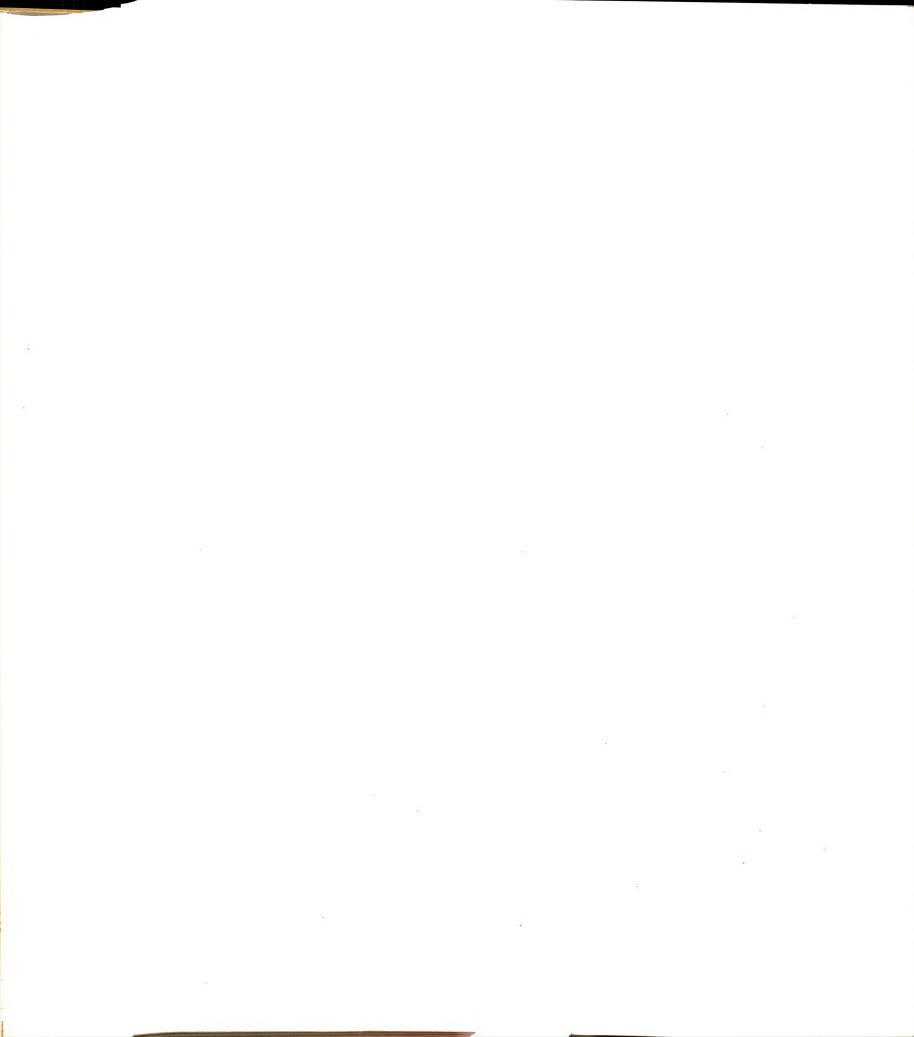
The most influential Spider, or "big bug," in the novel's present of the 1890's is N. V. Creede, who in his devious



and subtle ways is like some political character out of Dreiser's "Cowperwood Trilogy."

Accompanying the political corruption of modern society in the 1890's is subtlety and sophistication in the arts. Quick considered this new artistic style as a parallel degeneration, a further losing of the Edenic ideal, a dangerous model for American youth. Quick had prepared for showing this degeneration in The Hawkeye, where Fremont McConkey was depicted as one whose literary interests went from Edenic romances to reform propaganda and even satire. In The Invisible Woman, Jim Scott is an extension of Fremont in this regard. Jim Scott is a would-be author during this "time of germinating rebellion and unrest, not only in politics, under the stress of the financial depression, and in society, but in literature and the arts" (p. 136), and Quick describes him as an example of the current iconoclasm:

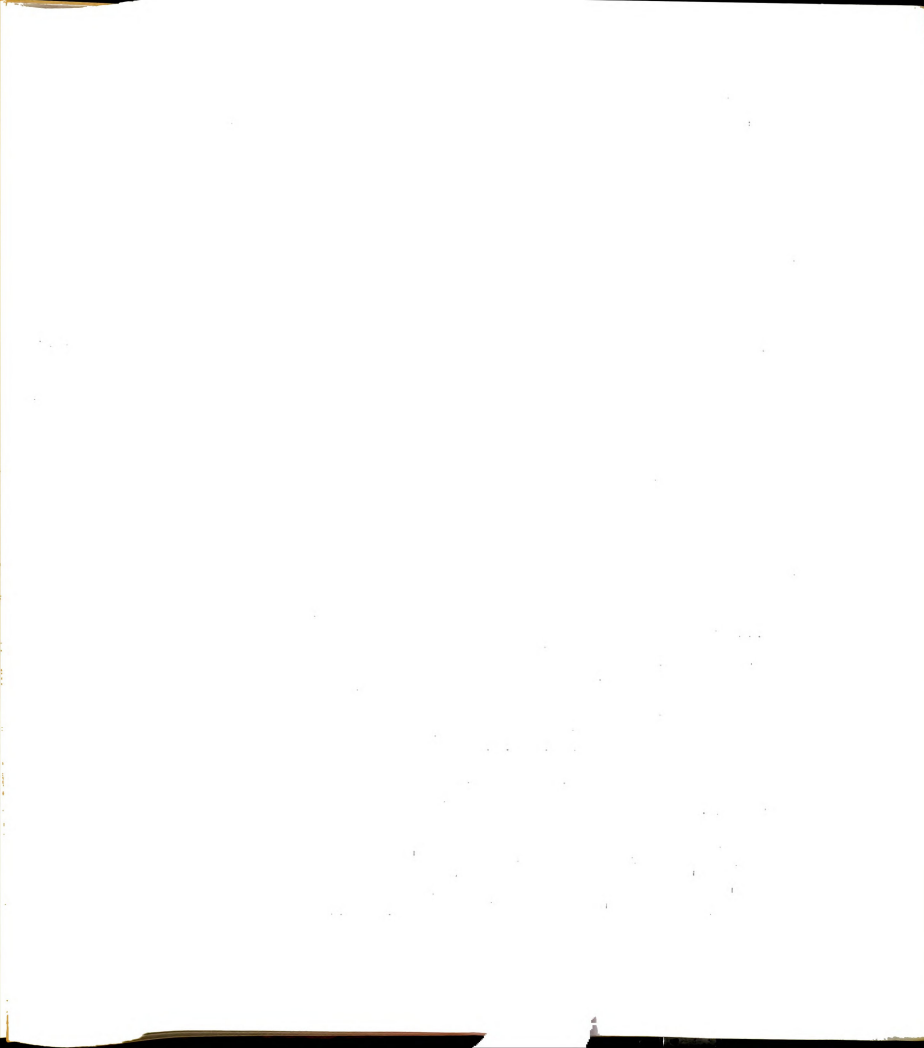
Jim Scott was an occasional contributor to The Philistine, that new freakish booklet which Harry Taber started in East Aurora, New York, and which Elbert Hubbard took away from him after a few numbers had been published. He tried to remember and quote those free-verse fragments of Stephen Crane's which appeared therein. Toward the accepted leaders in the field of literature he assumed an attitude of contempt. He read The Chap-Book which Stone & Kimball were trying to make into something in Chicago, though he called it The Chip-Munk as did Elbert Hubbard; and referred to its publishers as Rock & Bumball. He suspected that its chief artist, Frank Hazenplug, had a good deal in him; but he called him Plug Hazenplug all the same. He spoke slightly of Richard Hard-Reading Davis, 'Ponderous Howells,' Richard Watson Gilder, John Brisben Walker, and 'others of the Mutual Admiration Society of periodical makers'; and insisted that The Century was always taken because it looked well on the



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Jim Scott was an occasional contributor to The Philistine, that new freakish booklet which Harry Taber started in East Aurora, New York, and which Elbert Hubbard took away from him after a few numbers had been published. He tried to remember and quote those free-verse fragments of Stephen Crane's which appeared therein. Toward the accepted leaders in the field of literature he assumed an attitude of contempt. He read The Chap-Book which Stone & Kimball were trying to make into something in Chicago, though he called it The Chip-Munk as did Elbert Hubbard; and referred to its publishers as Rock & Bumball. He suspected that its chief artist, Frank Hazenplug, had a good deal in him; but he called him Plug Hazenplug all the same. He spoke slightly of Richard Hard-Reading Davis, 'Ponderous Howells,' Richard Watson Gilder, John Brisben Walker, and 'others of the Mutual Admiration Society of periodical makers'; and insisted that The Century was always taken because it looked well on the



center table. He reveled in Thomas B. Mosher's The Bibelot and the things of forgotten or neglected genius published therein. He referred to a certain great publication as The Homely Ladies' Journal, and to its editor as 'the unspeakable Bok,' or as Mr. E. W. Sok. He always called the rising mid-western novelist of the day 'Ham Garland of the Chicago Stock-Yards'; and assumed that he had named himself after a certain well advertised line of stoves and ranges. A much-talked-of Chicago litterateur he constantly referred to as 'Hobart Chatfield Say-it-again Taylor;' adding 'If it takes nine Taylors to make a man, and two Chatfields to make a Taylor, what's the answer.' He sneered at Nordau's Degeneration as a weak and feeble plagiarism of Lombroso. Gilbert Parker, not then Sir Gilbert, he nick-named Gallbert Faker. Poultney Bigelow was Poultry Bighead; and the author of Ben Hur, under the name of General Louisa Wallace, was accused of having announced a new book under the title of How I Came to Write the Account of How I Wrote My First Book. Jim called Robert Elsmere twaddle. One of the surprises of heaven, he allowed, would be that of Reginald de Koven when he got there at not being assigned the job of writing all the choir music. He was sorry that Mark Twain had lost all his money; but was it any worse, he inquired, than for Jim Scott never to have had any? . . . (pp. 136-137).

Although this passage exhibits a measure of satiric glee, Quick himself was not at home writing in this style and could not bring himself to supporting, in the last analysis, the development in American letters which the name-calling, contemptuous, sneering Jim Scott represents. To Quick, Scott was the new type of writer in America, gaining in popularity, but Quick could not approve this new type of writer. Spiritually more akin to Irving Babbitt and the "new humanists" than to the group of writers championed by Henry Louis Mencken, Quick preferred an Adamic praising instead of a satiric criticizing; he preferred, for instance,



to praise the "good old hymns" (Vandemark's Folly, p. 54) or the morally inspiring poems of Tennyson (The Hawkeye, p. 84 et passim); and in any event, the closer he brought the story of his Trilogy to the twentieth century (a century he escaped in the first place by returning to the nineteenth for the source of his story), the more complicated or troublesome these matters became in his view.

The Invisible Woman has only a few descriptions of outdoor nature, suggesting a "wicked" divorce from the romantic healing powers of nature and, hence, another example of the degeneration, decline, or corruption that signified what has been commonly called the emergence of modern America. One of Quick's descriptions even suggests that nature itself was becoming less wondrous, less praiseworthy, with the encroachment of civilization; this landscape is seen by old Magnus Thorkelson, his young daughter Christina (the "ignorant country girl" being educated by the city in most of the story), and Carrie Hanna (the citified cynic and companion of Christina):

The dead foliage lay in a rustling coverlet on the ground; while in the tops of the trees the huge leaves borne by the terminal twigs held on in spite of frost as if they had not yet learned how safe it is to die, save that when a slight breeze blew up, one by one they fell in zigzags to the earth in seeming sport of dissolution (p. 232).

This is a far cry from the hymns to nature given in the first novel. Consider, too, the rare scene, in the third novel, where Oliver and Christina leave their city office for a picnic in the country, only to find it difficult if



not impossible to escape the encroachments of civilization: "Some one had built a rude dinner table with plank benches on each side; but Oliver and Christina avoided such evidences of civilization . . . " (p. 416).

But the most important and most dramatic evidence of corruption concerns Owen Lovejoy Gowdy, now a full-grown man, with a family. Despite his illegitimacy which Quick has repeatedly identified with corruption, Owen himself would not appear corrupt but rather pure if he had only been left alone. Left alone, this well-drawn and memorable character would have been content playing his fiddle, and his dream is more to be recognized by his father than to inherit his materialistic riches. When Buck Gowdy dies, Owen does not even think of putting in a claim for the estate. It is N. V. Creede who thinks of that, and who has little trouble talking the generous-hearted Owen into accepting only half the estate if they win.

Owen had never really been left alone. Growing up, he had not escaped all the talk about his birth. This stigma leads him, furthermore, into an obsession nearly as strong as, though different in type from, the paranoia of Vivien Silverthorn. Owen's obsession--born of a simple yet sovereign fact--is to ferret out, and minutely document a treatise on, all the famous bastards of history. This project--to be entitled The Influence on History of the Irregularly Born (p. 265)--is obviously an undertaking beyond the scope of fulfillment in Owen's (or anyone else's)

lifetime, but he is undaunted. He collects evidence on cultural heroes--who "had no business to be born at all, at all!" (p. 229)--going as far back as, and including, William the Conqueror; and he reads his accumulating materials, notes found here and there, on these "penetralia of biography" (p. 331) to all who will listen.

Actually, Quick's attitude toward Owen is ambiguous. On the one hand, Quick approves of the fact that Owen is not a crook, such as the corrupt lawyer N. V. Creede; and if Owen's obsession has a note of sadness in it, it is at least not so frightening or dangerous as Vivien Silverthorn's obsession (which got completely out of hand and led to her death). On the other hand, Quick disapproves of the circumstances of Owen's birth. While most people would consider that being called an illegitimate child is not complimentary, Quick is excessive in his disapprobation of this particular label.⁴⁹ Moreover, Owen's illegitimate birth is central to Quick's purpose of depicting the corruption that defined the loss of Eden.

The stuffy courtroom scenes, where the battle concerning Owen takes place, are filled with examples of the

⁴⁹Quick's interest in the subject of illegitimate birth is evident not only in the Midland Trilogy but in his correspondence as well. Like Owen, Quick researched the parental origins of cultural heroes; for example, answering Quick's inquiry about Abraham Lincoln, Louis Brownlow (City Manager, Knoxville, Tennessee) concluded his three-page letter on the subject by saying that "Lincoln had more fathers than Homer had birth-places"--L. Brownlow to H. Quick, March 28, 1924, in the Quick Papers.

bankruptcy of reason, hence more examples of the corruption which Quick associates with "citified" culture. It is the crooked lawyer, N. V. Creede, who pleads the notorious "frontier seduction case" in which he places poor Owen as "Exhibit A" (p. 318). Paul Holbrook, who pleads for the other claimants (Mr. Boone Gowdy and Mrs. Florence Gowdy Addison of Kentucky), illustrates the absurd lengths to which refined reason can go when he objects that Owen's actually being Buck Gowdy's son is "immaterial" (p. 372). The evidence argued includes such things as a witness's remembering Buck Gowdy's using the word naturally (in connection with childbirth--or not) a third of a century ago (p. 408). Hairs are split, it is not unfair to say, and the tension mounts.

But all the intricate spider-spinnings of arguments (which Quick's experience as a lawyer helped him to write, of course, and certainly to appreciate)--the implicit mingling of humor and gravity--leave the "impassive face of Judge Holt as free of expression as one of his own North American Indian pictographs" (p. 367)--even when the narrator reports Creede's summation of the case, as follows:

It was a great picture, after all. He had gone back into the dimness of the pioneer era, and had shown the lawless passion, the tragic suffering, the seduced innocence, the growth of this son of a dark romance, the admissions on the part of the father--not enough of them, he feared--of his responsibility, the growing evidence of a desire on the father's part to help the son, the fact that, working in his way, he had done more to make it possible for the son to achieve such success as lay within his powers than many fathers of



legitimate sons were able to do. He had shown the development of the drama with the growth of society . . . (p. 409).

Quick's theme, again, is as clear and as old as Genesis: the corruption, immorality, or evil in modern American society is best understood in the terms of a basically sexual temptation and seduction of original innocence. And it is clear that the resolution of this theme depends on the decision to be rendered in the case of Gowdy vs. Gowdy.

N. V. Creede believes that he will win the case, because of his political "machine" power that he thinks reaches all the way up to the Supreme Court. To help make sure of the Supreme Court decision, if the case should go that far, Creede tries to make an unethical deal with Oliver Silverthorn, who looks forward to being a member of that Court. In a chapter ("Mutual Misconceptions") as suspenseful as the temptation scene in Sister Carrie of Hurstwood at the safe, Oliver Silverthorn finally demonstrates that he is as idealistic as Emerson Courtwright of The Broken Lance by asserting his independence from the powerful Creede.

Silverthorn's other major temptation, it should be noted here, concerns his conduct with Christina, before Mrs. Silverthorn's death. Christina, too, senses this temptation, as during the "forbidden" picnic in the grove, which the narrator reports as follows:

While we are at the confessional, let us admit that the trip across the country and the picnic luncheon in the grove increased the tension in Christina's being. When a structure is built to resist a constant pressure, like that of the

waters of the ocean, it must not, must not yield. Every yielding weakens it. It must remain fixed for ever on its foundations without shifting an inch, or even a line. If it is moved over by a hairsbreadth, that moving represents a loss of safety. This loss can never be recovered against that pressure, so soft, so powerful. The wall with every slightest shifting, loses its hold on its foundations; and presently the water may come seeping in, the little harmless openings will widen, all holds will be lost on banks and foundations, and the ocean will come roaring in over the crumbled walls, 'and all the earth is in the sea' (pp. 421-422).

The temptation of Oliver and Christina is as strong as that past "great trouble" of Buck and Rowena, but Oliver and Christina do honor the proprieties of sexual conduct, as did Cow and Virginia in their "Grove of Destiny." Quick is repetitiously clear on this problem of the origins of evil in America and on his preaching to avoid any further falling.

Throughout The Invisible Woman Quick intends to raise the suspenseful and mythical question: is the modern culture (of the 1890's) condemned to total corruption, or will a redemptive rebirth take place? Along the way there are hints of rebirth in this novel and possible ways to achieve it. Uncle Surajah's capitalistic "Farm Gate to Paradise" has been mentioned, but it unfortunately came to nothing because, to Quick's way of thinking, the motivation of a get-rich-fast capitalism was too closely identified with sexual seduction. Early in the novel, it is suggested that "Science will usher in the Golden Day" (p. 134), that Jesus came to earth to distribute materialistic wealth,



not to save souls in the usual sense--that Science will fill the bellies of men so that their souls can then be saved (p. 135). Here, of course, Quick repeats the thesis of The Broken Lance.

Toward the end of The Invisible Woman, rebirth is suggested in a rare landscape description, in the first paragraph of Chapter XXIX ("Sap Creeps Up and Blossoms Swell"):

Spring was blowing through Iowa searching for the vanished prairie. It found no broad, grassy, open spaces over which to waft the cry of the wild-fowl, the soft alto-horn note of the grouse, the fragrant smoke of the burning grasses, the scent of the millions of wild-flowers of the springtime of old. Yet, it carried the new smell of the turned furrow to become accustomed to which it had had only a mere half-century; it bore the low of cattle and the crow of the cock, the scent of the crushed corn-stalks of last year's fields as the harrows ground them up over the newly-sown oats, it was filled with the rustle of the leaves of the high groves which made the roads shady and filled the horizon with the upstart beauties of a new woodland . . . (p. 410).

Christina herself is called "spring-like" (p. 411) and thus good in this chapter.

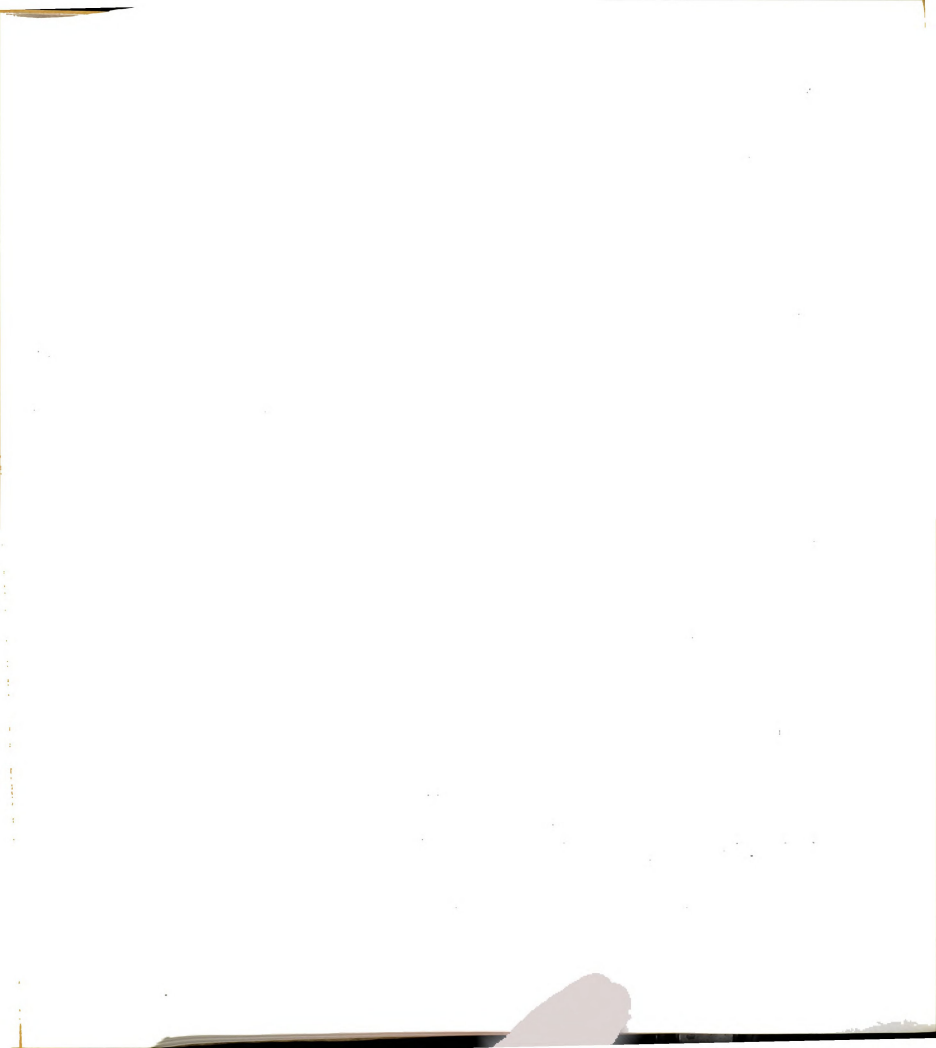
In contradistinction to the commonly held idea of Rowena's despoilation during the days of the old virgin prairie, Christina sometimes remembers her departed mother as being a Christ-like martyr, innocent in God's eye (p. 164). Much like her mother, Christina is also Christ-like--as her name suggests--and she demonstrates a martyr's action when she goes against Creede, in behalf of Oliver, even though this action might mean the sacrifice of her

half brother's estate. The entire issue again hangs on the outcome of Owen Gowdy's case, which, even after Creede wins it in lower court, is considered by everyone to be "equally balanced" (p. 440)--it could go either way--in the Supreme Court.

The ending of The Invisible Woman is optimistic. In the last chapter ("Two Very Weighty Decisions"), which is located out of the city, Christina is a "farm girl again" (p. 483)--after having played her "invisible" role in promoting ethical behavior in the Iowa civilization. No scenes of the Supreme Court are given, but its verdict is in Owen's favor, as one learns from the next-to-last page of the novel, and he looks happily forward to an economic apotheosis as master of Blue Grass Manor. Christina makes the weighty but happy decision to marry Oliver, and the novel concludes with the image of them walking "shamelessly each with an arm about the other's waist, each looking blissfully into the other's eyes" (p. 488).

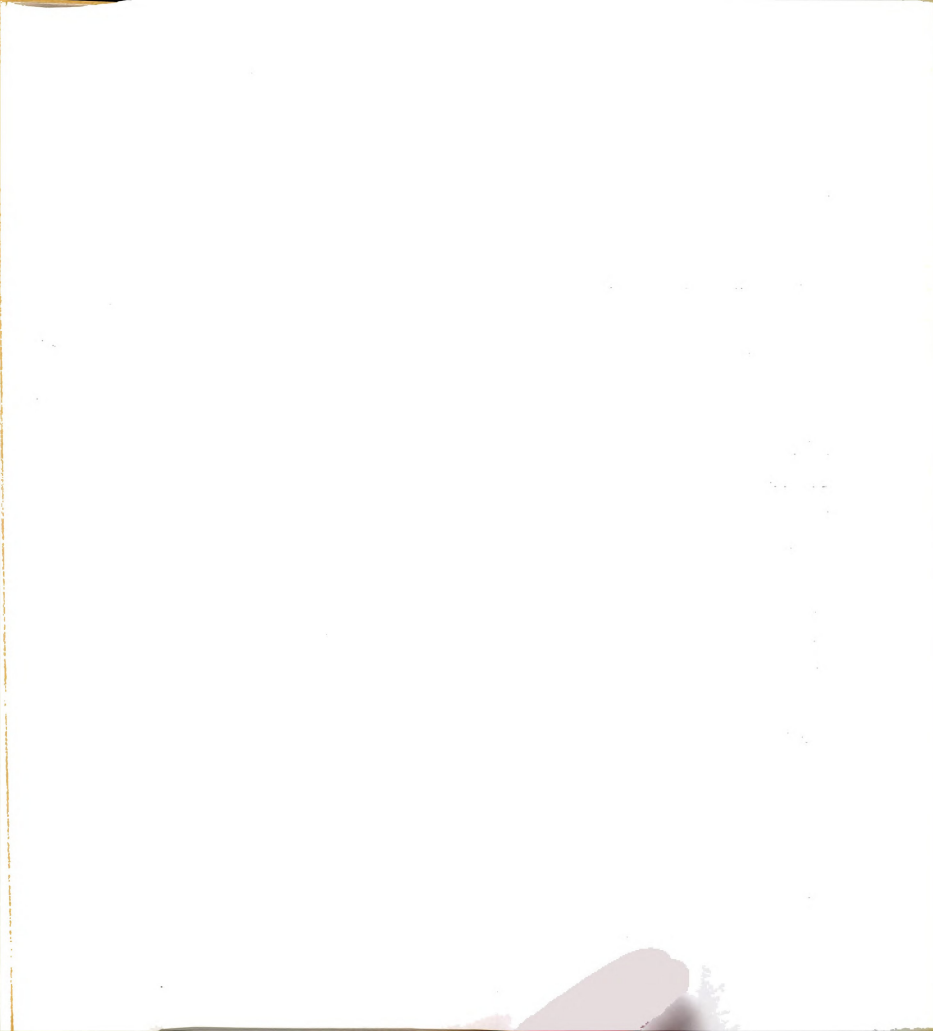
The Invisible Woman is the weakest novel in the Midland Trilogy. It was recognized as such by the reviewers in Quick's own day.⁵⁰ Quick's ambiguous attitude toward Owen Lovejoy Gowdy, his intention of depicting the evil and

⁵⁰For example, Dorothy A. Dondore, in The Prairie and the Making of Middle America (1926), p. 397, n. 1, asserted: "The Hawkeye (1923) carries on effectively the record of the settlement and stabilizing of Iowa, but the third book, The Invisible Woman (1924) is distinctly inferior to its predecessors, being a poorly proportioned and badly digested combination of politics and melodrama."



corruption of the 1890's, and his concurrent and uncontrollable wish of finding and showing the good in the American society of that decade--these are the main reasons why The Invisible Woman is not a strong work of art. Yet, even though The Invisible Woman is a weak novel in and by itself and even though it is the weakest in the Midland Trilogy, it is nevertheless important to understanding Quick's total design in the Trilogy. It is in the context of the other two novels that The Invisible Woman makes sense and assumes a significance in American literature.

In completing the story that began in Vandemark's Folly, what Quick wanted to say and struggled to say, in The Invisible Woman, was that even though the American was identified as an illegitimate child (represented by Owen Lovejoy Gowdy) more and more as the twentieth century approached, this depressing label did not necessarily have to be the American identity. Instead, the American could be, hopefully, a New Adam, or Christ (represented by Owen's half sister, Christina)--but this identity depended on a renunciation of the multiplicity and corruption of city life and a return to the simplicity and innocence of the farm. As usual, Quick was optimistic that this could be done. The fact that, after writing The Invisible Woman, he did not continue his "epic" story into the twentieth century does not mean that he was unhopeful for a back-to-the-land movement; he had already said all that he really had to say, in the Trilogy, and he had already, to the best of his



ability, dealt with his twentieth century in the fictional and semifictional works previously discussed in the present paper. Instead, Quick saw fit, in 1924, to return to the land of the past once more by writing an autobiography of his youthful days in Iowa, One Man's Life (1925), which repeats once again what he had already said in the Midland Trilogy.

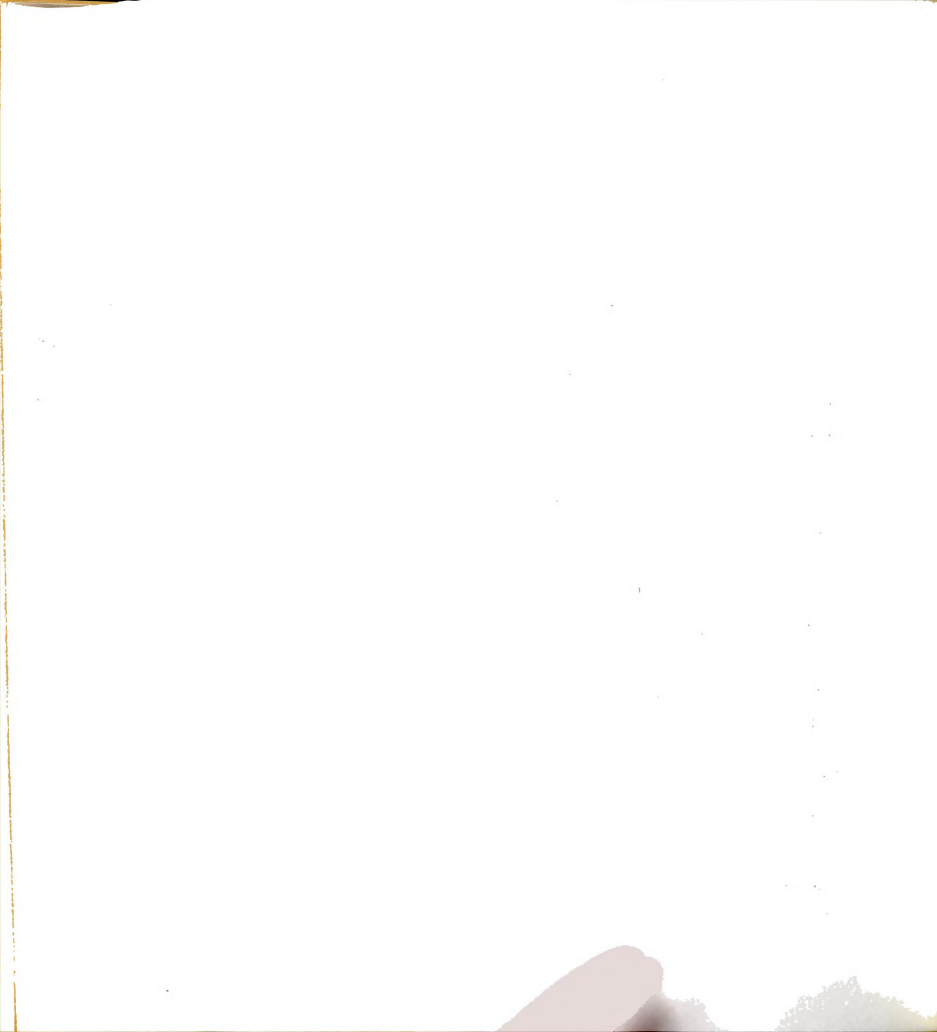
In conclusion, the most important comments to be made about the Midland Trilogy are that it identifies what Quick considered the legitimate American and what he considered as a growing threat to that identity, and that the Trilogy is governed more by the Adamic myth, even in episodic details, than by any other source. In Vandemark's Folly, the American is a legitimate, Unfallen Adamic farmer. In The Hawkeye, the American is in the process of falling, of becoming "citified" and losing his identity. In The Invisible Woman, the American is either an illegitimate child or a Christ-like innocent, hopefully the latter; and evidently the American will be one or the other, depending on whether the virgin land (or any sort of frontier) is originally seduced (capitalistically exploited) or courted and married (farmed) according to the proprieties.



CONCLUSION

For the purpose of a broad overview and concluding appraisal, the fictional writings of Herbert Quick should be divided into two groups: (1) the various works that preceded the Midland Trilogy and (2) the Trilogy itself. With the exception of Yellowstone Nights, these early works have little literary merit. As a group, however, they are important as they illustrate the sort of problems that confronted an American writer during the early years of the twentieth century and, more specifically, because they show Quick's struggle toward the writing of the work on which his ultimate literary reputation must rest.

All of Quick's fictional writings represent a concern for the American identity, but there is a difference between the Trilogy and the pre-Trilogy works. All the pre-Trilogy works (except the Russian novelette he co-authored) dealt with Quick's twentieth-century American scene. The hero of almost all these works was an innocent youth, lacking a clear sense of his identity. Repeatedly this hero considers whether he should adopt a philosophy of capitalistic individualism or of socialistic cooperation--or should he be educated at all? These issues are first presented by Quick in the adventures of his first



fictional hero, eight-year-old Edgar, in In the Fairyland of America (1901). Was it possible that a capitalistic speculator and town-developer could be morally good as well as bad? That was the question of Aladdin & Co. (1904), a question tentatively answered in Double Trouble (1906), in which the youthful hero, Florian Amidon, was "his own villain." Should the hero become a socialist who "plunges" into the "inferno" of the city in order to reform the capitalistic villainy there? Perhaps he should, but, as The Broken Lance (1907) showed, his chances for success were not good. In Quick's next work, Virginia of the Air Lanes (1909), the Adamic hero was satirically presented as a melodramatic capitalist, as was the villain. Such obfuscation of the hero's identity and also Quick's awkward mixing of melodrama and literary realism and romanticism kept all these early works from being reprinted.

Yellowstone Nights (1911) was a turning point in Quick's fictional writings. In this exceptional work, Quick perceived, more clearly than ever before, the setting that would be so important later in Vandemark's Folly, the virgin land. In Yellowstone Nights he celebrated the virgin land as an object of pilgrimage, as an Edenic factor that could control various quarrels, including those which were evident in his previous fiction. Yellowstone Nights is a coherent work of fiction and Quick's only work before the Trilogy which deserves a reconsideration by literary critics today.



Quick then turned, as did Fremont McConkey in The Hawkeye, from fiction to a propagandistic semifiction, in The Brown Mouse (1915) and The Fairview Idea (1919), in quest of a better form in which to communicate his message. His message was, simply, that farm life is good and city life is wicked, and that Americans should therefore be encouraged to stay on the farm, next to nature. The farm was the appropriate place for Quick's youthful, innocent, Adamic hero. On the farm this American hero should have no fear of the education or sophistication which Quick associated with the seductive capitalism of the wicked city; for on the farm the hero would pursue a pragmatic and agricultural education, cooperate with his fellow farmers in a socialistic manner, and thus retain his original simplicity and innocence. Like the Unfallen Adam in Genesis, Quick's farmer hero would dress and keep the Garden. The Brown Mouse and The Fairview Idea cannot be called viable fiction, because they are too heavy with propaganda, but these books are nevertheless significant of a hopeful (though rather late) attempt in the twentieth century to pump new life back into a Jeffersonian agrarianism, or what Henry Nash Smith calls the "Myth of the Garden," and they are significant of Quick's further development as a derivative writer.

All of Quick's fictional writings exhibit his indebtedness to other authors. The most noteworthy of these other authors are Robert Louis Stevenson, in Double Trouble; Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry George, in The Broken Lance;



Geoffrey Chaucer, in Yellowstone Nights; Moses, in The Fairview Idea; and Mark Twain and Moses, in the Midland Trilogy. Elements of Moses' Genesis can be seen in Quick's works from In the Fairyland of America onward, and a broad overview suggests that Quick's gradual movement toward a greater and more consistent use of Moses corresponded with his growing clarification of the American identity and realization that the American Adam ought to stay put in the Garden.

Thus, by 1921, Quick had written a number of works set in contemporary America which fully and clearly identified the American as the agricultural Adam. For a number of reasons he now turned from the present to write his most distinguished work, a trilogy reconstructing his American past. One reason was the autobiographical impulse, which is common among persons of advanced age (Quick was sixty), to relive a life by telling it. Next, there was Quick's view of himself as a "martyr," or "savior" (cf. The Brown Mouse, pp. 140, 304-305), who wrote propaganda to cure the ills of his contemporary America but who felt a growing and compelling wish to identify and celebrate his "Virgin Mother." Finally, there was the growing chaos, urbanization, degeneration, or clutter of Quick's contemporary America which finally prompted him to look back to the days when there was "such a thing as innocence" (The Hawkeye, p. 71) in order to interpret the origins and also the development of the American experience, as it was reflected

in the history of his own life and region. This interpretation was given its fullest and most coherent form in the Midland Trilogy.

Broadly, Quick's Trilogy tells the three-part story of Adam as given in the Scriptures. First, there is the account of the Unfallen Adam, Cow Vandemark; second, the Falling Adam, Fremont McConkey; and third, the New Adam, Christina. It is a challenge to recall any other single work in American fiction which presents such a full and coherent account of the American identity derived from the Adamic myth. In The American Adam, to which all subsequent writers on the American Adamic theme must be indebted, R. W. B. Lewis claims that Natty Bumppo is "the full-fledged fictional Adam" (p. 104) and cites little more than one passage from Cooper, perhaps a strained one (pertaining to Deerslayer's "symbolic reward of a new name," Hawk-eye), to support the claim. But Quick's Iowa Hawkeye, Cow-Fremont-Christina, is a closer parallel to the Biblical Adam and therefore worthier of being called the "full-fledged fictional Adam."

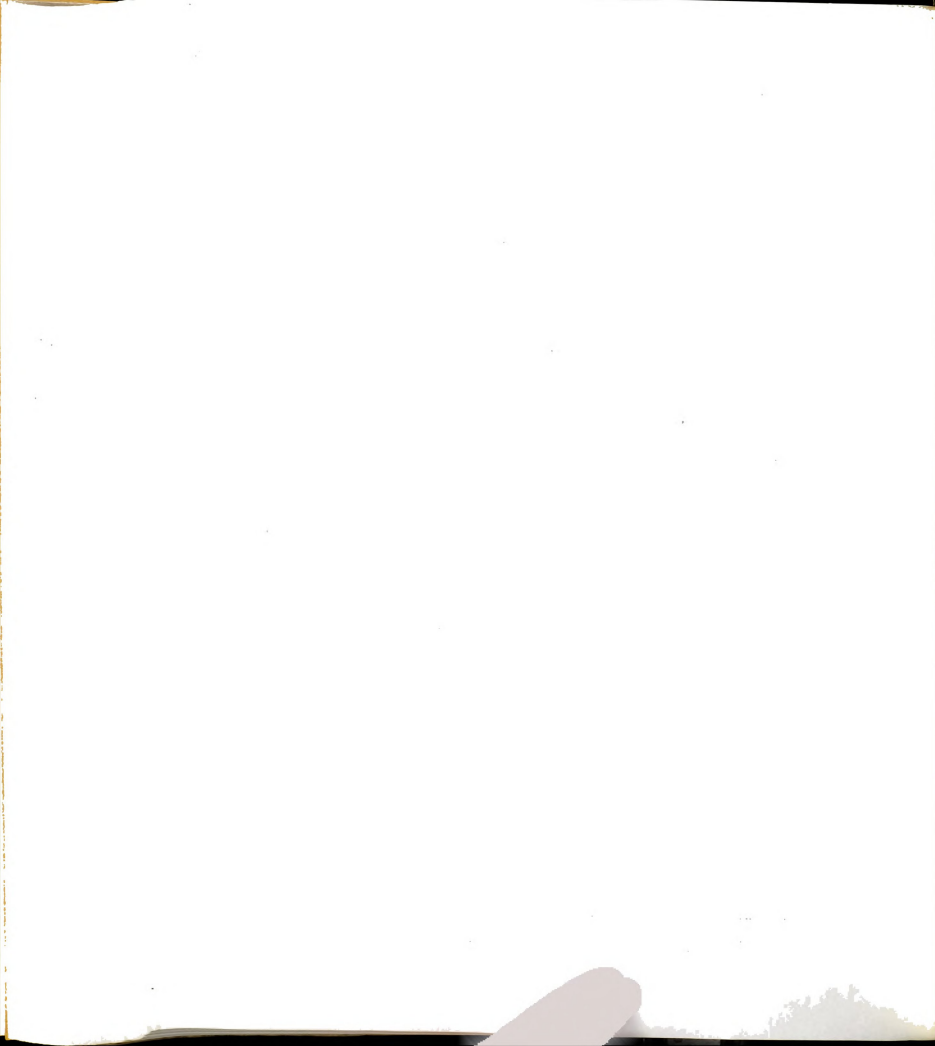
All of this is not to say that Herbert Quick may be called a great or hitherto unrecognized major American writer. His total accomplishment is too frail for that. He is and must remain a minor writer, but a significant one and one worthy of reconsideration. Any number of minor writers may be considered important, if for no other reason than that they are essential to the very definition of



major writers--"major" is meaningless without "minor"--but Quick is a minor writer who can be useful in more than this general respect.

Quick is precisely that kind of writer--in the tradition of Emerson's party of Hope and Holmes's "The Boys," an Adamic writer--who, as R. W. B. Lewis said, "has been frowned quite out of existence" during the middle of the skeptical or pessimistic twentieth century but who nevertheless offers, to those critics who seem to be transfixed by the wasteland, "opposite possibilities on which to feed and fatten."¹ And if Lewis's thesis that the Adamic myth governs American literature is acceptable, then Quick is a significant example indeed. If for no other reason than Quick's presentation of the Adamic American story in the Midland Trilogy--a work which can be a standard to understand and appreciate other writers of fiction (major or minor, pessimistic or optimistic) who have drawn upon the Adamic materials in a less complete, less coherent, or less parallel manner--the fictional writings of Herbert Quick deserve a reconsideration.

¹The American Adam, pp. 195-196.



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One Man's Life: An Autobiography, Bobbs-Merrill
(copyright by Ella Corey Quick).

1928: We Have Changed All That, Bobbs-Merrill (co-authored
with Mrs. Elena Stepanoff MacMahon).

Manuscript Sources

Bobbs-Merrill Papers. The Bobbs-Merrill files which contain a considerable number of Herbert Quick letters are housed at the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. These files are eleven boxes which measure 12 x 15 inches and are each 3½ inches deep; in addition to author's correspondence, they contain readers' opinions or reports of readers on works submitted for publication, art work such as sketches for book jackets and reproductions of paintings to be included in books, and other promotional materials.

Herbert Quick Manuscript Collection. This is housed at the State Department of History and Archives, Historical Building, Des Moines, Iowa. It consists of ten volumes, indexed as follows:

Vol. 1--The Hawkeye, 535 pages of typewritten manuscript

Vol. 2--One Man's Life, 338 pages, carbon copy typewritten ms.

Vol. 3--One Man's Life, 338 pages, original typewritten ms.

Vol. 4--The Broken Lance, typewritten bound manuscript. Fly leaf contains letter to Edgar Harlan, Curator, signed by Mr. Quick, in which he states this is his best book; also letter to future readers of book.

Virginia of the Air Lanes, typewritten ms. bound.

Vol. 5--The Invisible Woman

At the Trial of Souls [We Have Changed All That]

Vol. 6--The Invisible Woman, with author's corrections

Vol. 7--There Came Two Women

Vols. 8-10--Miscellaneous I, II, III--contents as follows:

Miscellaneous Vol. I

The following are marked with the name of a magazine, no doubt having appeared in that publication:

American Magazine

"Iowa"--carbon copy of typescript, also corrected typescript

Colliers

"The Kaiser's Moustaches"--corrected typescript
2/14/15

No title (on oranges)

"A National Farm Mortgage System"

"Weeds and Literature"

No title (Thanksgiving Day)

"Postponing Rural Credits"

No title (on civilization in jeopardy)

No title (on commerce ruined by war)

"Mysteries, Miracles and Movies"

"Back to the Land"

No title--(Laden with war taxes)

Country Gentleman

No title (on road tax)
 "The Corn Center"
 "The Daylight Saving Law"--editorial for
Country Gentleman
 "The New Rural School in Action" and "A Crisis
 in Education" (These two were not marked
Country Gentleman, but were included in
 group.)
 "The Come-Back of Major Foot"
 No title--(on sending member of family to Agri-
 cultural College) 4/4/16
 "The Farmers and the Politicians"
 "Finance Problems for Farming"
 "Rural Credits Legislation Probable"
 "Have the Land Banks Lowered General Interest
 Rates?"

Farm and Fireside

"The Social Center and Rural Community"
 "How Was It Done?"
 "The Price of Wheat"
 No title--(on the Scotchmen of the Highlands)
 No title--(on Farmers gain marketing movement)
 "Perhaps We Were Wrong"--editorial
 "What Is a Christian?"
 "Get Ready, It's Time Well Spent"
 "Farm and Fireside and the War"
 "The Court of Last Resort"
 "Looking Backward"
 "Guessing at the Top Price"
 "Henry Wallace"
 "With the Editor"
 "Is It Good to Eat?"
 "Three Crops Gain \$570,000,000"--editorial
 "High Fever and Delirium"
 "Our New Partners"
 "The Most Beautiful"
 No title--(greatest farm trouble to get work done)
 No title--(written to "Dear Friend"--(on getting
 subscribers and renewals)

Red Book

"The Federal Imp Company" published 1906

Saturday Evening Post

"An Adventure in Backtothelandia"
 "The Romance of a Book-Farmer"

("Sex Rebellion in Fairview"
 ("Fairview's Girl Crop"
 ("Uncle Sam in Fairview"
 ("Foreword to "The Fairview Idea"
 "Industrial Preparedness"
 "Big Game Hunters"
 "Uncle Sam Cleans Up Springfield"
 "Wherewith Shall We Be Fed"
 "Tackling the Midgard Snake"--typescript with
 corrections

Special--"A Crisis in Grain Marketing"
 "Price and Payment"
 "The Men on the Job"
 "Are the Grain Magnates Forming a Trust?"
 "Why Did the Grain Magnates Go In?"
 "Do the Farmers Need the Properties"
 "The Gist of the Great Grain Scheme"
 "The Rural Schools"--an address
 "The Farmer and the Railroads"--Address at the
 National Conservation Congress in Kansas City,
 September, 1911
 "The Railways and Our Future"--Address before the
 Texas Chamber of Commerce, at Dallas, Texas,
 October 14, 1921--marked "For Release"
 "The End of Glory" "The Glory Ceased" "When Glory
 Ceased or Efficiency" Book Rights Reserved--
 (no magazine given)

Miscellaneous Vol. II

Poems marked Pilgrim--all typescripts
 "Our Lady of Dreams"
 "Ferrer"
 "A Petition to St. Petersburg"
 "Camelot--to Edwin Markham"
 No title--(when Count Tolstoy was excommuni-
 cated)
 "The Yacht Race"
 "The Anglo-Saxon"
 "The Two Admirals"
 "The Old Spring Brook"
 "Mr. Dingman on Agitation"
 "Could I for One Brief Hour"
 "The Ballad of an Infant Art"
 "Nebulae"

The following articles are included in a group of
 more than 200 marked "N. E. A." [Newspaper Enter-
 prise Association]

"The Japanese Situation"
 "Theodore Roosevelt's Influence on American Life"

"Climbing the Greased Pole"
 "Balance Up the Teams"
 "Another Lesson from Panama"
 "Race Prejudice and the Jews"
 No title--(on tipping in the Canal Zone)
 "Conservative American Voter"

Miscellaneous Vol. III

"Real Trouble with the Farmers"
 "Army School Plan"
 No title--(on war brings hardships)
 "New Mortgages for Old"
 "Article I--America an Experiment in Transportation
 Article II--Transportation Possibilities and Im-
 possibilities
 Article III--Solution of the Railroad Problem"
 No title--Chapters I--XV--End--typescript, some
 handwritten
 No title--Chapters XXVII--XXXIV--end, typed
 [these pertain to The Invisible Woman and
In the Fairyland of America]

Herbert Quick Papers. These are in the possession of his daughter, Mrs. Raymond N. (Margaret Q.) Ball, at 45 Elm Lane, Rochester, New York 14610. These Papers contain over 200 letters of Herbert Quick's correspondence with various literary and political persons from 1900 to 1925. They also contain such documents as Ella Corey Quick's biographical sketch of her husband (written post 1925), Helen Quick Dillon's typescript of "When Glory Ceased" and her (Herbert's sister's) notebook typescript of Poems by Herbert Quick (written by Herbert 1887-1905) and typed by Helen in 1933), and certain certificates and miscellaneous items (such as a "Program for the Dedication of the Herbert Quick Memorial Schoolhouse," Grundy Center, Iowa) which were kept as remembrances of his life. Xerographic copies of 200 of these letters and of the other documents mentioned are in the possession of the present writer, at 222 S. Sawyer St., Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901.

Personal Correspondence. This includes letters and other items from each of the following:

Mrs. Raymond N. (Margaret Q.) Ball, 45 Elm Lane,
 Rochester, New York.

Mr. Edward Connell Quick, 2300 E. Mountain St.
 Pasadena, California.



- Mr. Fred T. Newbraugh, 6 Rockwell Circle, Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.
- Mr. Alden Capen, of Coolfont Recreation, Inc., Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.
- Mr. James K. Owens, Archivist, Syracuse University, New York.
- Mr. David C. Mearns, Chief, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
- Mrs. Lucille Cobb, Head, Special Materials Department, Library, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.
- Dr. Elfrieda Lang, Curator of Manuscripts, The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.
- Miss Lois Stewart, Rights and Permissions, Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Mr. Edward J. O'Malley, O'Malley's Book Store, 377 Park Avenue South, New York, New York.
- Mrs. May T. Suzuki, University Microfilms, Inc., 313 N. First Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- Mrs. Martha Beltz and Mrs. Kathleen Coatsworth, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.
- Mr. Emory M. Pittenger, Librarian, Agricultural Library, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.
- Miss Ruth H. Davis, Librarian, and Miss Josephine L. Harper, Division of Archives and Manuscripts, of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.
- Mr. William J. Petersen, Superintendent, The State Historical Society of Iowa, Centennial Building, Iowa City, Iowa.
- Mrs. Aloys Gilman, Librarian, State Department of History and Archives, Historical Building, Des Moines, Iowa.
- Miss Margaret L. Smith, Reference Librarian, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.
- Miss Diane Volkert, Sioux City Chamber of Commerce, Iowa.

Mr. Earl A. Martin, City Clerk, Sioux City, Iowa.

Miss Mary Rhoades, Sioux City Public Library, Iowa.

Miss Aubrey L. Haines, Historian, United States Department of the Interior, National Parks Service, Yellowstone National Park.

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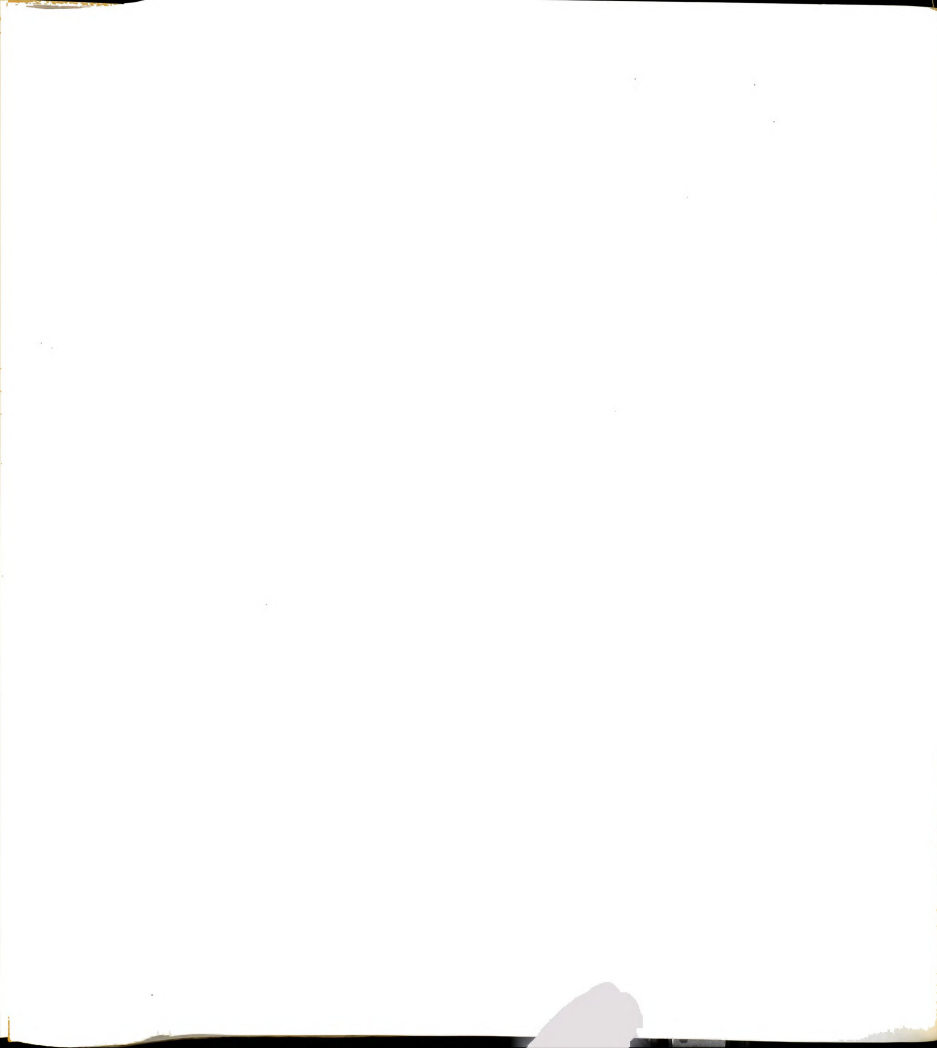
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