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THE NOVELS AND HISTORIES OF RANDALL PARRISH:
A STUDY IN POPULAR AMERICAN CULTURE

presented by

Helen Margaret Draper

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of the requirements for

Doctor of Philosophy degree in American Studies

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THE NOVELS AND HISTORIES OF RANDALL PARRISH:
A STUDY IN POPULAR AMERICAN CULTURE

By

Helen Margaret Draper

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

THE NOVELS AND HISTORIES OF RANDALL PARRISH: A STUDY IN POPULAR AMERICAN CULTURE

By

Helen Margaret Draper

This study discusses the novels and histories of Randall Parrish, an American author, who wrote during the first twenty-two years of the twentieth century. Parrish, a Romantic and a formula writer of popular fiction, attracted a large audience, thus he enjoyed tremendous success as his books sold over three quarters of a million copies in a period of less than two decades. He, as did many other authors, satisfied the desires of the vast reading public for exciting tales, mystery, adventure and romance.

Parrish frequently used war as a backdrop (theme) for his tales: such as the French and Indian War, the Revolution, the War of 1812, the Black Hawk War, and the Civil War. As a formula writer his stories appear contrived and overly predictable when viewed from a realistic perspective. He resorted to stereotyped characterizations and as a result his novels, in particular, reveal racial and ethnic bias.

His heroes are usually of Anglo-Saxon heritage, brave adherents of the chivalric code growing out of Europe of the Middle Ages. His heroines are pure, sweet, and often "the damsel in distress." His

Helen Margaret Draper

villains are, by contrast, totally wicked, and often their ethnic or racial origins are not Anglo-Saxon.

The study speculates and offers possible reasons for Parrish's fading popularity after nearly two decades of popularity.

DEDICATION

This study is lovingly dedicated to the writer's father,
Dr. O. Lawrence Abbott,
who suggested the topic of this study and who stated,
regarding the earning of the doctorate,
"You can do it, Helen!"

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The writer wishes to express her sincere appreciation to all who have helped make this study possible. Particular appreciation is extended to Dr. Victor Howard, chairman of the doctoral committee and Dr. Russel B. Nye, special consultant for this study, for the many hours of patient and knowledgeable consultation generously afforded the writer. To the remaining members of the committee, Dr. Gordon Stewart, Dr. Larry Landrum, and Dr. James McKee, much appreciation is extended and also to Dr. Paul Hurrell, who was the outside reader of this dissertation.

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For unfailing patience and continuous love, encouragement, support and help during this period of research the writer wishes to express her gratitude to her children, William B. Draper III and Margaret E. Barkman; her brother, Dr. John L. Abbott; her sister, Mrs. Jane E. Hart; and her late parents, Dr. O. Lawrence Abbott and Margaret E. Abbott.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The purpose of historical fiction is often overlooked or as one critic, Ernest Leisy, assesses it:

Historical fiction is often dismissed as mere "escape literature". It is of course more than that, when it is well written. Even so, whatever takes one away from where he is and brings him back refreshed, has a justification of its own ... One reason for the enormous popularity of historical fiction is that it satisfies many tastes ... the need of the human mind for a story. It offers suspense and drama ... (it) gives us an intensified sense of the happiness and misery which human life encompasses.¹

John Cawelti in his book of criticism, Adventure, Mystery, and Romance, defines historical fiction in terms similar to Leisy's, but from a different perspective, that of formulaic structure. Cawelti suggests that all popular literature shares this formulaic structure in common, whether the literature is romance, western, spy or detective. However, the purpose of all popular literature, which includes historical fiction, remains essentially the same as Leisy viewed it: it is a means of entertainment, a means of escape, a means of refreshment, a means of getting out of one's self through an imaginary journey into the past. All that the formulaic structure does is to lend a commonality, or to provide conventional way, of presenting or treating things or persons "in a great number of individual works." As a result, a pattern emerges that is common to the works of a large number of authors; for example, the

stereotyping of various ethnic groups and the use of similar plot lines within stories.²

Historical fiction is viewed from yet another perspective by John Tebbel in Fact and Fiction. He states that

this ability to relate the materials of history to a mass audience imposes a special responsibility on the writers of historical fiction ... (as) the historical novelist, looking at the same materials as does the professional historian, (but he) sees them differently.³

Therefore, Tebbel continues, the historical novelist has this "special responsibility"⁴ which means that the novelist is obligated to create an interesting, exciting, and entertaining tale while retaining the essential facts of history without twisting them. This is necessary because for much of the mass reading audience, history is uninteresting and boring. As a result the

vast, ignorant adult majority must be attracted by history presented in a more palatable way, via the historical novel which blends accurate fact with entertaining fiction.⁵

According to Nye in his book on the Popular Arts in America, The Unembarrassed Muse, historical fiction in America came about through Sir Walter Scott:

The man who made respectable fiction popular in the U.S. and popular fiction respectable was Sir Walter Scott, whose tales of history, legend, adventure, folklore, scenery, love, and patriotism enthralled the early nineteenth century.⁶

This is still true in the twentieth century as evidenced by the incredible number of historical fiction and romance novels purchased daily in this country by people from all levels of society. One only has to look at the huge assortment of titles available at an equally huge number of stores throughout the United States to judge how many such tales are available. Current authors such as John Jakes (Kent

County Chronicles), Barbara Cartland, Mary Stewart, and Victoria Holt are representative of those writing historical romances in the 1980's.

Unfortunately it is not possible to make a valid comparison between the amount of historical fiction sold in the earlier part of the twentieth century with the numbers sold today due to a number of factors:

- 1) the market has changed dramatically as to the quantity printed,
- 2) at the beginning of the century the figures were "sold" figures,
- 3) in the 1980's this is no longer true as figures are based on "printed" figures,
- 4) at the turn of the century books were all hardbound, even reprints,
- 5) now most books are paperbacks, especially reprints,
- 6) sentimental novels (i.e., Cartland stories) are printed simultaneously by several companies,
- 7) reading public is so much larger than at the turn of the century,
- 8) "sold" figures now are based on numbers sold to distributors, not numbers sold to customers and therefore, it cannot be determined how many copies are returned,
- 9) "best sellers" are not that technically, but rather distributed figures which give a false figure.⁷

Nye states also, "the emergence of a popular book market naturally depended on the appearance of a mass popular audience".⁸ Such was the case in the United States as the population quadrupled between 1790 and 1860, and as education simultaneously became more common among the masses. More public schools became available and compulsory education laws caused many persons to attend school who might not otherwise have done so. The need for literacy for all people, no matter their economic or social status, was recognized more fully as the nineteenth century came to a close; as a result the reading population grew.

Book publishers recognized this huge new market at the turn of the twentieth century; they also determined to make America the book publishing capital of the world. Of course, competition with other countries, especially England, was fierce. Some publishers, such as Scribners and McNally, determined to appeal only to elite audiences, and to publish only the highest quality literature. However, other companies wanted to reach as much of the reading public as possible, with quality as a secondary concern. Two such companies were A. C. McClurg and A. L. Burt. Alexander McClurg founded the McClurg Company about 1866 after he returned from the Civil War. Initially, McClurg denounced popular literature but upon reassessment, determined that it was a necessary part of publication, and as a result his company became one of the largest publishers of popular literature.

Albert L. Burt started out working in a drugstore, went on the road as a traveling salesman, and then left that work for a career as a publisher. In 1893 he established the A. L. Burt Company. Like McClurg, Burt realized that there was a mass market for fiction, especially adventure stories. The Burt Company, however, unlike McClurg's, specialized in cheap books that could be purchased for a nominal sum, usually less than a dollar. It was also a highly successful reprint house, publishing inexpensive books, often for 50 cents or less. As a result, the Burt Company could offer a great many titles at a price the public could afford. The Burt Company proved to be considerable competition to other publishers, such as Grosset & Dunlap, which, ironically, eventually absorbed the Burt Company.

Both of these companies published the novels of many well-known authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Edgar Rice Burroughs, Zane Grey, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and O. Henry, but more important is the fact that they published the novels and two non-fiction works of (George) Randall Parrish. Some of the Parrish titles under Burt publication, either as originals or reprints, were Prisoners of Chance (1908); Beth Norvell (1907); A Sword of the Old Frontier (1905); Keith of the Border (1910); The Red Mist (1914); My Lady of Doubt (1911); My Lady of the North (1904); and When Wilderness Was King (1904).

The McClurg Company published many of the same titles of Parrish's usually as originals, not reprints, although the McClurg Company, like the Burt Company, sought to reach the general reading public by charging low prices. This was in spite of the fact that McClurg, according to Tebbel (John William, A History of Book Publishing in the U.S., Vol. II, p. 172) had declared:

That the colonial and revolutionary aspects of history had been "worked out" as material for novelists, but Western America offered novelists the possibilities of wide sales and McClurg was proven incorrect, and that the colonial and revolutionary aspects of history were, indeed, not "worked out".⁹

Also McClurg declared that a book publisher should "place at the public's feet books inexpensive enough so all could enjoy."¹⁰ Certainly McClurg must have felt vindicated when, by 1914, My Lady of the North had sold 70,000 copies, My Lady of the South 60,000, Bob Hampton of Placer 65,000, A Sword of the Old Frontier 52,000, Beth Norvell 53,000, and When Wilderness was King 55,000. Parrish's "sold" fiction would even rate well even now, given the ratio of population to readers then and today. After the initial sales by

McClurg, the A. L. Burt Company, primarily a reprint publisher, reprinted many of Parrish's tales, often seven and eight times. For example, Keith of the Border was reprinted six times within five months, October, 1910, to February, 1911.

By 1915, sales of Parrish's novels rocketed even higher. Evidence of this is revealed as in one year's time My Lady of the North sold yet another 30,000 copies in reprint for a total of 100,000. My Lady of the South sold 10,000 more copies and now totaled 70,000. Bob Hampton of Placer sold a total of 80,000. Only A Sword of the Old Frontier showed the least gain, up only 1000 copies. When Wilderness Was King did only slightly better, gaining a total of 5000 sales, up from 55,000 to 60,000.

It is difficult to determine why some of Parrish's books sold better than others, but certainly he was extremely popular; between 1904 - 1915 nineteen titles sold over three-quarters of a million copies. These 19 titles included stories of the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, the Civil War, World War I, Custer and the Indians, the Black Hawk War and others which were not war stories.

Undoubtedly, Parrish's writing style had popular appeal. His vocabulary makes his stories easily understood, even by those with only an elementary school education. He often chose to write in the first person, a technique which quickly involves the reader. His settings are all romantic ones: the old South before the Civil War, the great plains of the Old West when the early pioneers were settling it, the wilderness of Illinois and Michigan at the time of the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, and the War of 1812. His stories of the sea span the early 1700's to the early

1900's. Finally, his "spy" thrillers were set in many locales: the East Coast, New Orleans, the West circa 1900, and the antebellum South. All of the settings are American (with one exception, Shea of the Irish Brigade), although Europe, the Philippines, Mexico, and parts of South America are often described by the heroes as they speak of their military experiences.

Parrish often enhances his settings with detailed descriptions, thus adding to reader enjoyment. In Gift of the Desert, Deborah Meredith, the heroine, describes the Arizona desert of post World War I as a

sunkissed vista comparable with other sunsets in Germany and France, when the ground was yet red with the blood of sacrificed manhood.¹¹

This "sunkissed vista" had none of the horror of those of wartime Europe but the comparison causes Deborah to remember it. The reader can relate also the metaphoric poetic description of

the dull leagues of desert - a distant blue range of mountains with their ragged summits - the heat waves of desert afternoons which were like a misty miracle - the sun sinking slowly behind distant serrated peaks - darker shadows lay along the level surface, with gleams here and there of gray and red, while arching over all hung the clear Arizona sky, slowly turning to purple.¹²

In other tales, such as When Wilderness Was King, Maid of the Forest, Beyond the Frontier, Parrish describes the forests of Illinois and Michigan circa the French and Indian War:

Against the swift, surging currents of mighty rivers, up silvery streams, through tangled and gloomy forests - along league after league stretching across that trackless wilderness - with death lurking in the night shadows, and danger skulking in sunlight -¹³

Another forest scene is described thus:

How dark and still it was, for the fires had died down into beds of red ash, and only the stars glimmered along

the surface of the river - the forest about us was black
and still...¹⁴

At the end of Beyond the Frontier Adele "gazes down upon the
scene below" -

It was one of peace now, the silvery Illinois winding
hither and yon among its green islands, the shadowy
woods darkening one bank, and the vast meadows stretching
northward from the other.¹⁵

Parrish's descriptions of the sea in his novels are equally as
splendid. In Wolves of the Sea his hero, Geoffrey Carlyle, describes
his time as a shipboard prisoner thus:

the creaking timbers - the resounding blows of the
waves - driven off course southward by a severe
storm - ¹⁶

the dread monotony of the voyage - the baffling
head winds¹⁷

the quiet sea and bright sunshine (a blessed relief
from the stench of vomiting and wounded prisoners
below deck)¹⁸

We were (the ship and crew) but a hurtling speck
between the gray above and the gray below - the
crest of the surges swept to the gunwhale, sending
the spray inboard... a more dismal, gloomy view
surely never unraveled itself before the eye of man.¹⁹

In Prisoners of Chance Benteen tries to board a ship in an
"enveloping fog." He "vainly endeavors to pierce the thick mist."²⁰
The tension of the boarding scene is heightened when he tries to
throw a rope loop over the end of the spar and the intense fog and
encroaching darkness spoil his aim. A few pages and several attempts
later, Benteen succeeds. The reader, too, feels Benteen's glee as he
tells of it - "I felt a thrill of delight tingle through me as the
end settled softly over the end of the vague, distant spar."²¹

In The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel, Parrish opens his mystery-romance and captivates the reader almost immediately by the intriguing lines:

the unfathomable mystery abiding upon the face of the great deep, the constant marvel of huge, heaving leagues of watery solitude, secret and profound, must ever remain so vast, so inexplicable, as to be beyond any interrogatory of the finite - the strange, the unexpected, lurking everywhere.²²

By using such a statement in chapter one, page one, Parrish attempts to draw the reader into the scene and hopes that the reader will become, if not a participant, at least a fascinated onlooker.

In only one tale, The Air Pilot, does Parrish describe the scene from above the earth. Again, he captivates his reader who, in his imagination, accompanies the hero, Philip Dessaud, and the heroine, Helen Probyn, on their flight over Lake Michigan. Dessaud describes the scene thus:

In front of us now, a grim, magnificent picture in the wan light of the early dawn, spread the waters of the lake ... bursts of white where waves dashed against the breakwater, and beyond a gray shimmer, disappearing into mist. Below on land, it was yet night, and the myriads of street lamps blazed gorgeously through the gloom, marking the vast extent of the city.²³

As the plane climbs, Dessaud remarks further:

We could perceive a faint tinge of red far to the eastward, with purple streamers piercing the low-hanging mist which still obscured the horizon. Beneath this upper light the fog floated, a dun-colored cloud, its higher undulating waves violet tinted and assuming fanciful shapes.²⁴

Helen Probyn comments that this, her first flight, "has been more like a dream than reality."²⁵ As the dawn arrives and the "folds of vapor" thin and fade, Dessaud remarks,

All at once they seemed to roll aside, like two curtains drawn by invisible hands.²⁶

Reader interest is gained also by Parrish's creation of characters representing a multitude of ethnic backgrounds. Although most of his heroes and heroines are American born, there are a few exceptions. Raoul de Coubert and Philip Dessaud are Frenchmen. Geoffrey Benteen has: an English father and a Spanish mother. Other ethnic backgrounds appear in the various secondary characters, such as "sidekicks," military personnel, officials, villains, and occasionally a servant or clergyman. Often, the villains, or other "undesirables," are of Jewish, German, Spanish, or Mexican background, while one group especially harshly dealt with is the Indians. Only once is a black, Old Sallie, (Gordon Craig) described as villainous, in order to lend credibility to the villain, since Sallie turns out to be his mother. Ordinarily, Parrish portrays the Negro as the usual stereotype: servant, superstitious, none too bright.

One character (The Mystery of the Silver Dagger), a Jew, has "a beaked nose and a dull sallow-complexion"²⁷ and is not to be trusted. Parrish apparently disliked Jews, judging from the uncomplimentary description. In the same story, Parrish describes a bartender as "unmistakenly Polish, and of no high type,"²⁸ which again stereotypes him by ethnic background.

Parrish captures his readers in other ways also; for example, he tells of crooked lawyers (Gordon Craig), wayward women (Molly McDonald), socialist radicals and anarchists (The Mystery of the Silver Dagger), and atheists (usually his villains).

One can assume Randall Parrish wrote to sell, as do most authors, and thus chose subjects to which a wide and varied audience

could relate. Also, since Parrish's novels were published in the first two decades of the twentieth century, it is safe to assume that much of the anti-Russian, anti-German, anti-Mexican, anti-Indian, and generally anti-foreign bias reflects a time when many Americans were suspicious and hostile toward non-Americans and non-whites.

Parrish researched his novels to make them historically accurate. Unlike many authors who admit openly that they rearrange history to suit themselves and to make a more exciting tale, Parrish conscientiously strove to remain as accurate as possible. However, in spite of his care, Parrish erred at least once when he used an anachronism in Prisoners of Chance. The hero, Geoffrey Benteen, speaks of "photographing" everything in his mind as he is led through a ship²⁹ - the time is 1770, some time before photography was invented. I doubt, however, that many of Parrish's readers caught that error, or cared about it if they did.

Parrish contrives to lend credibility to his ethnic characters by having them use dialect, broken English, or, in some instances, foreign phrases. The Germans employ many a "dis and dat," the French shriek "Oui, oui eet shall be so" and say "ze" instead of "the." The Poles and Germans both make liberal use of "yah" instead of "yes." The Irish sidekick, Tom Burns, in When Wilderness Was King, uses brogue and sprinkles his conversation with many religious references.

Then it's Ol' Tom Burns a ye're a-maulin' round,
which seems ter be yer speciality - a-jumpin' on
unoffensive settlers in the dark, an' a-chokin' the
life outter them.³⁰

The Indians also utter stereotypically broken English. An Indian chief, Topenebe, in When Wilderness Was King, describes a white man,

Wau-mee-nuk great brave, but him big fool come here
now. Why not stay with Big Turtle? He tell him
Pottawattomie not want him here.³¹

Parrish sometimes incorporates historical figures into his stories, a customary technique used in writing historical fiction. In My Lady of Doubt Major Allen Lawrence is dispatched by Washington himself on a dangerous mission into British-held territory. In the course of the story, Lawrence meets Alexander Hamilton and Martha Washington, and hears other real persons spoken of, including Lafayette, Sir Henry Clinton, Sir William Howe, and Baron De Steuben. Another interesting technique Parrish employed is the use of rare diaries, letters and other virtually unknown documents as source material, which he then modified via organization and modernization of language.

Two of his especially suspenseful tales, Prisoners of Chance and Wolves of the Sea, include extended forewords, describing his sources. The manuscript for Prisoners of Chance "reached him through natural lines of inheritance" but Parrish did not get around to reading it for several years. His curiosity was obviously piqued by the manuscript, which "revealed a certain historic basis," not "mere fiction,"³² although this may have been a device Parrish used. However, Parrish decided "to submit the narrative to public inspection, that others, better fitted than I, may judge as to the worth of this Geoffrey Benteen, hero of the narrative." Parrish states that he "compared his (Benteen's) narrative with all we

moderns have learned regarding them (the now extinct Natchez Indians).³³ Some of the "moderns" Parrish cites are Parkman, Charlevoix, Du Pratz, and Duponceau; their writings corroborate the truth of what Benteen wrote. Even so, Parrish may have adjusted his facts to correspond to those of other historians.

Although Parrish found it necessary to adapt the Benteen manuscript slightly, he declares his characters were real persons: Geoffrey Benteen, Eloise La Freniere de Noyan, Charles de Noyan, Governor Don Antonio de Ulloa. At any rate, Parrish brings them to life in his adventure story.

Wolves of the Sea is also presumably based on a manuscript written by Anson Carlyle and a factual account according to Parrish. This time, however, Parrish admits in the foreword to the novel "to practically rewriting the manuscript entirely, retaining merely the essential facts, with an occasional descriptive passage."³⁴ The author of the manuscript, Anson Carlyle, although apparently a well-educated man, was verbose in the style of his time (the late 17th century), which detracted from his essentially exciting tale.

Truly, Randall Parrish was a publisher's delight. His romantic tales sold and sold, because he wrote what the reading public wanted to read. Upon examination of Parrish's literary devices, it is easy to see why his tales of adventure, mystery and romance were so popular.

Who was this man, Randall Parrish, the author of twenty-seven action packed adventure-laden novels plus two huge volumes on the history of Illinois and the Great Plains?

Randall Parrish (full name George Randall Parrish) was born on June 10, 1858, in Kewanee, Henry County, Illinois, the son of Rufus and Francis (Hollis) Parrish. His parents owned a large farm in Henry County and that is where Parrish spent his growing up years before he went to college in Iowa. He attended the University of Iowa at Iowa City around 1875, received his law degree in 1879, and passed the bar exam in Iowa but chose to practice in Wichita, Kansas (1858-1883).

From 1883-1885 he was a prospector (gold and other metals) in Arizona and New Mexico. Apparently he chose to leave that livelihood for work on daily newspapers in various cities, Denver, Sioux City and Chicago. In Chicago, where he spent many of his later adult years, he was a special commercial journalist. He lived also in Mattoon and Kewanee, Illinois. While still working as a journalist he wrote his first novel, When Wilderness Was King in 1904. Other novels followed: My Lady of the North the same year, A Sword of the Old Frontier 1905, Bob Hampton of Placer 1906. In fact he produced at least one book each year except for 1921, through 1922, the year before his death. For 1904, 1905, 1907, 1912, 1913, 1916, 1918 and 1922, two books each year were published.

His two non-fiction works appeared in 1905 and 1907, Historical Illinois 1905, The Great Plains 1907. In 1911 Parrish was awarded an honorary doctorate of literature from the University of Iowa, probably the result of the fact that by this time he had produced 10 novels plus two non-fiction works, all published by this time.

Between 1911 and 1922 he wrote for Chicago area newspapers and some of his stories appeared as serials in newspapers before they

were published in book form. His total output of novels for those years was twelve, seven historical fiction, three westerns and six mystery-spy-intrigue type tales. Sometimes he wrote in different categories within a given year; for example, in 1908 he wrote Prisoners of Chance, historical fiction, and The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel, a mystery-spy story. In 1913 he did this again when he wrote Maid of the Forest, historical fiction and The Air Pilot, a spy mystery.

In 1918 he unearthed a manuscript, presumably a true story written in the late seventeenth century by an Englishman, Geoffrey Carlyle, who was exiled to America aboard a prison ship. The manuscript had ended up in the hands of a descendant, Anson Carlyle, who died without kin and then somehow Parrish got possession of it, rewrote it in more modern language, filled in the spots that could not be deciphered, then, voila, another historical fiction novel appeared. That same year he wrote another mystery-spy story, The Strange Case of Cavendish. In 1922 he produced his last two stories, one western, Gift of the Desert, which features the heroine, rather than the hero. Parrish used this approach once before in 1915 in Beyond the Frontier, but that time it was historical fiction. The other story that came out of 1922 was a mystery -- no spies -- titled The Case and the Girl.

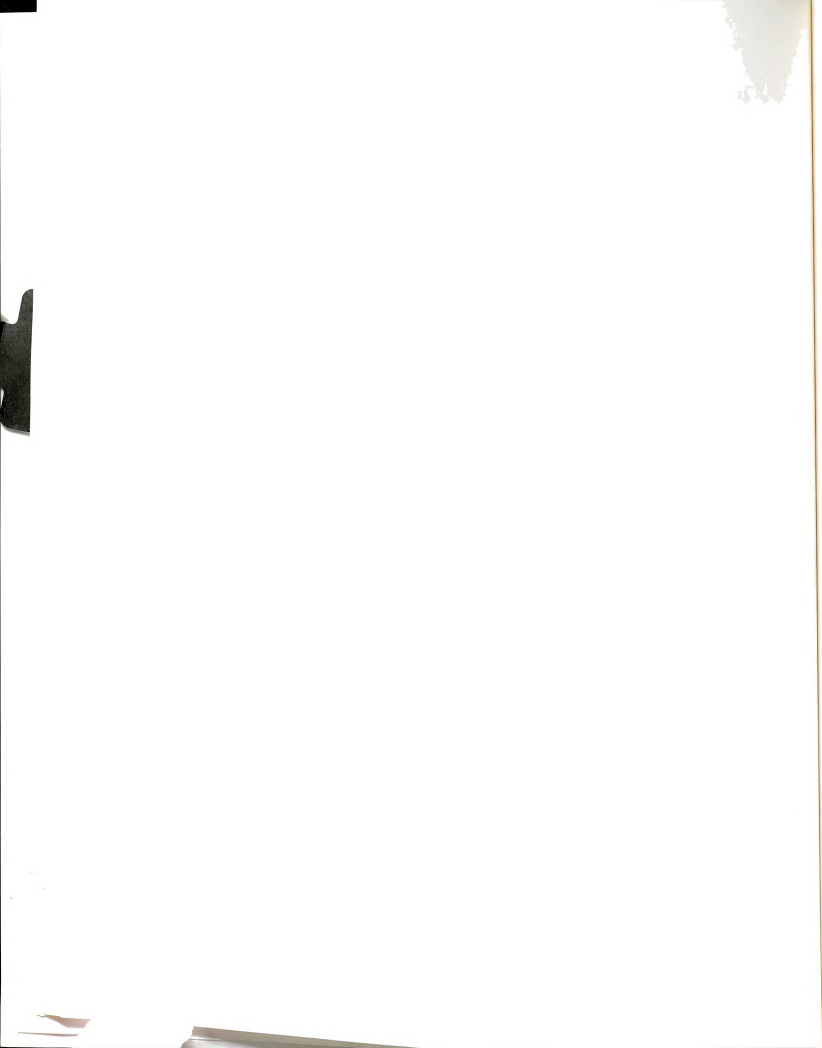
This was the end of book writing. Parrish died of heart problems on August 9, 1923, in Kewanee, Illinois. His death certificate lists his occupation as author.³⁵

Although Thomas Wolfe once declared "you can't go home again;"³⁶ Parrish did and was successful in and around the area of his birth.

Ironically, he died some sixty-five years later in the community where he was born.

Endnotes

- ¹Ernest Leisy, The American Historical Novel, p. 3.
- ²John Cawelti, Adventure, Mystery and Romance, pp. 13-14.
- ³John Tebbel, Fact and Fiction, pp. 2 and 6.
- ⁴Ibid., p. 6.
- ⁵Ibid., p. 12.
- ⁶Russel Nye, The Unembarrassed Muse, p. 21.
- ⁷Dawn Martin, Marketing Dept., Suits News, Lansing, Mi, telephone interview, March 1982.
- ⁸Nye, p. 23.
- ⁹Tebbel, A History of Book Publishing in the U.S., Vol. II, p. 172.
- ¹⁰Ibid., p. 107.
- ¹¹Randall Parrish, Gift of the Desert, p. 2.
- ¹²Ibid., p. 1.
- ¹³Parrish, When Wilderness Was King, p. 45.
- ¹⁴Ibid., p. 51.
- ¹⁵Parrish, Beyond the Frontier, pp. 405-406.
- ¹⁶Parrish, Wolves of the Sea, pp. 12-13.
- ¹⁷Ibid., p. 16.
- ¹⁸Ibid., p. 17.
- ¹⁹Ibid., p. 277.
- ²⁰Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 80.
- ²¹Ibid., p. 81.
- ²²Parrish, The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel, p. 9.



- ²³Parrish, The Air Pilot, pp. 280-281.
- ²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 281.
- ²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 285.
- ²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 287.
- ²⁷Parrish, The Mystery of the Silver Dagger, p. 156.
- ²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 157.
- ²⁹Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 50.
- ³⁰Parrish, When Wilderness Was King, p. 5.
- ³¹*Ibid.*, p. 208.
- ³²*Ibid.*, p. 9.
- ³³*Ibid.*, p. 10.
- ³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 1 - foreward.
- ³⁵Death certificate entry.
- ³⁶Thomas Wolfe, Look Homeward, Angel, p. 201.

CHAPTER II

Parrish's View of America

Parrish's two histories, Historic Illinois and the Great Plains are greatly influenced by the Romantic theory of history of the 19th century in America. This theory which grew out of western Europe, particularly Germany, emphasized the idea of a national spirit which develops in all cultures, the idealistic course of progress and the hand of the Creator in all events. Also in America there was yet another aspect: the sense of mission. Many settlers, inspired with a vision of religious freedom, viewed America as a new Promised Land where men could do God's will as well as prosper materially. This theory relied heavily on emotion, rather than on reason, as the interpretative principle in historical writing, declaring that though man by nature is good, he is corrupted by institutions. In literature and art the critical emphasis was placed on the love of nature and the common man; the inspiration for writing and painting was derived from nature, and those things and persons close to nature.

In his Society and Culture in America, R. B. Nye defines early 19th century American historical theory this way:

Early nineteenth-century American historical theory, then, drawing from both rationalist and Romantic sources, was marked by these traits: an attitude of objectivity toward the facts of the past, asking for impartiality and freedom from preconception; a belief in progress, buttressed by transcendental idealism and reinforced by the rationalist faith in an upward social tendency; the recognition of a master plan or controlling

scheme behind the shifting facts of history; an interest in the evolution of national institutions, leading to an emphasis upon "national genius" as the creative force underlying historical development.¹

The historian, therefore, had an obligation to be objective in his recording of the facts of the past, to believe that men can progress, moving ever upward toward a better world, and to locate and explain God's laws of moral order made manifest in action. George Bancroft, dean of the Romantic school historians, declared that "each page of history may begin with Great is God and marvelous are his plans among men."²

Although Parrish does not pay tribute to the Creator in such a direct fashion as Bancroft does, his work reflected much of nineteenth century American historical theory. He strove to be objective in his recording of the facts of the past; this he did by citing many primary sources, while his use of secondary sources are carefully selected from reputable authors such as George Bancroft, Herbert Bancroft, and Hiram Chittenden.

The influence of 19th century Romantic theory of history was revealed in his two histories and his 27 stories. For example, he subtitled The Great Plains, "The Romance of Western American Exploration, Warfare and Settlement". His dedication is especially indicative of his reflection of the 19th century view:

To those who, by reason of their courage, privations, and sacrifices rendered possible the writing of this story of American achievement, the men and women who won the Great Plains from savagery to civilization.³

Even further indication of his Romantic view of the past is evident in the preface of The Great Plains. His objective, he states, is:

to clothe the statement in language fitted to appeal to the reader's imagination ... It is written largely for those to whom history has been heretofore dry and unpalatable, and my sole desire is that it may awaken within their hearts a fresh interest in those who were the pioneers in the redemption of the Great Plains.⁴

Parrish, in his two histories, the Great Plains and Historic Illinois, views the white man's redemption of the land in America as justified for a number of reasons. For those white men coming from western Europe where they had no chance to realize their human potential, physically or spiritually, the recovery of the land from both the Indian and nature was the right of those who had suffered too long from persecution abroad; in America this was to be rectified. The fact that the Indians were here already was of little concern, he believed, to the original emigrants and their descendants. The Indians, like the land, needed to be cleared away so that the white man could establish his faith, his society, and his culture as he believed he had a right to do.

Parrish emphasizes that the white men who came to settle the land permanently had more of a right to drive off the Indians and clear the land than those who came merely to explore and plunder before returning to their native countries. Since those emigrants who came, initially, to settle permanently were predominantly Anglo-Saxon, Parrish seeks to plant the idea in the mind of the reader that these Anglo-Saxons had the right to redeem the land for themselves and their descendants.

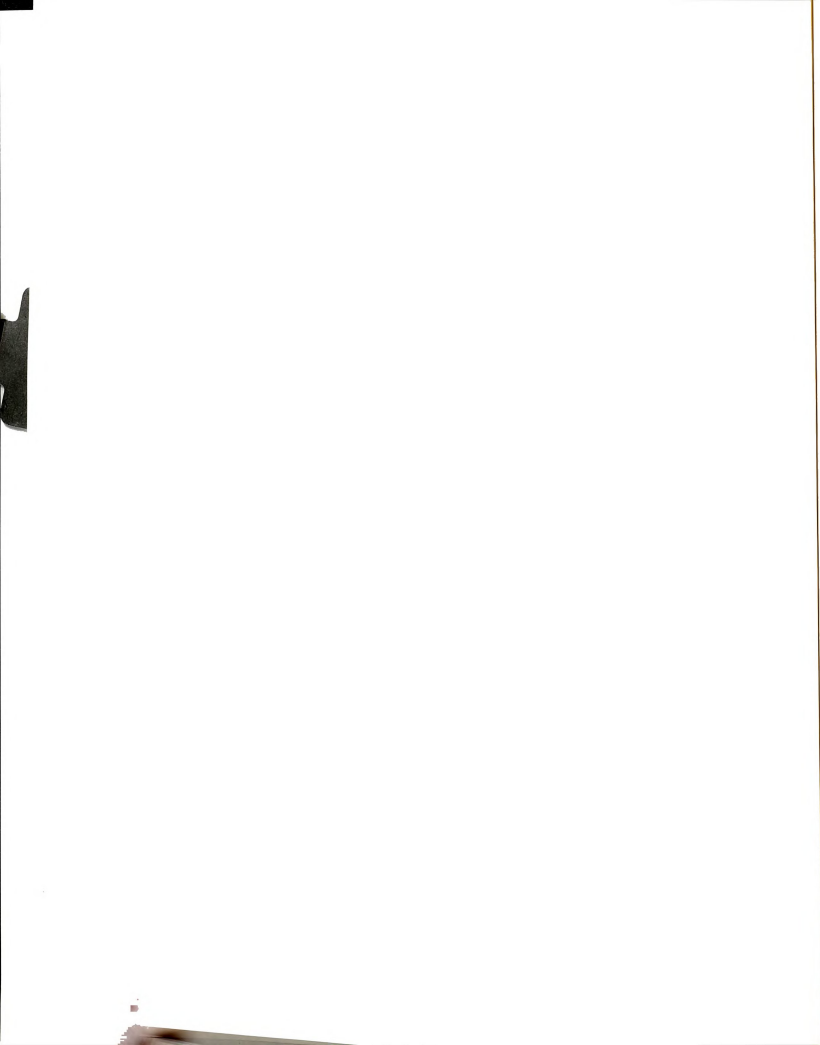
Although he wrote only two volumes of history, one about Illinois and one about the Great Plains, Parrish's fiction also is filled with accounts of actual events and detailed descriptions of the geographical settings of the tales. The reader cannot but realize that Parrish

is fiercely proud of his native land, even when he tells of the drab, dreary and often dangerous city streets and of dregs of society who haunt them. But when he describes the landscape of the West, the seascapes of the Atlantic and Pacific, the ice-bound North and the hot, humid South, and the luxurious forest areas and waters of the Great Lakes the reader becomes even more aware of how intensely emotional Parrish's view of America is -- in his vivid descriptions the American identity springs to life. As Parrish sees it, in America not only could a man (primarily a white man, especially one of Anglo-Saxon heritage) find freedom, redemption, and renewal, he could find also opportunity to better himself and to gain wealth in this land of plenty. But then too, Parrish's heroes are often not so much interested in material gain as they are in the capture of a feeling of self-worth.

Parrish reveals his concepts of America in a variety of ways. Sometimes he is straightforward in his accounts of the land, yet at other times he is more subtle; the reader must detect for himself just what are Parrish's views. In the concluding lines of his book, The Great Plains, he states the assumptions underlying his idea of the country:

-- out of the East they came to take possession; over the long miles, across the rivers and the prairies, came the conquering Anglo-Saxons -- men, women, children -- armed with the plough and the spade, animated by the dogged resolution which is the inheritance of their race, thrilling to the thought of home, and to the passion for possession. The hour and the man had come; the Great American Desert was a thing of the past. Le Roi est mort; vive le roi!⁵

With this passage Parrish's view of America is well-established, at least with respect to the Anglo-Saxons. Of course, he deals with



other ethnic groups also, but the Anglo-Saxons receive his greatest praise, characterized as "conquering", "doggedly", "resolute", and "passionately possessive."

The reader finds himself "listening" at least, to Parrish's view of America, even if he does not always accept it. Furthermore, the reader realizes how intense Parrish's feelings are as he, the reader, "relives" imaginatively the suffering, the enthusiasm, the curiosity, the strength and the perseverance of those who traversed this country, especially in early days.

In regard to the problem of the Indian again Parrish reflects his reliance on 19th century historical theory, to which the Indian was "a troublesome moral issue." Bancroft, himself, wrote concerning this dilemma:

The Barbarian who roams our western prairies has like passions and like endowments. he bears within him the instinct of Deity, the consciousness of a spiritual nature; the love of beauty, the rules of morality.⁶

It was apparent to the white man, however, that

the Indian was different, inferior, and ... he had been an obstacle in the path of those English colonists whose mission it was to create an ideal Christian commonwealth in the American wilderness.⁷

The moral issue of how to deal with the Indian confronted the white settler as:

How could the elimination of the Indian and the displacement of his culture by the American settlers be explained and justified within a reasonable historical and philosophical framework?⁸

To work out an answer to this problem, Bancroft "resorted to a double solution,"⁹ seeing the Indian sentimentally as Cooper had done, characterizing him as a child of nature, doomed to vanish because he had "come into the presence of a race more powerful than his". But the

Indian, according to Bancroft, was unable to employ the endowments he shared in common with the white man; he acted like "an animal dominated by instinct, in whose life the senses held dominion." Thus, "the Indian was doomed to disappear - that was his destiny as he was not equipped to survive."¹⁰ However, one could still recognize "the admirable qualities of the Indians and his cultural contributions to American society".¹¹

Parrish's concepts of American history he shared with those historians and sociologists who, like Bancroft, wrote from 19th century social and anthropological theory. He thus devotes much of his two histories to the problem of Indian versus white man. There is scarcely a chapter in either history that fails to mention encounters or conflicts between the two races. But more important is the fact that Parrish quotes extensively from such Romantic historians such as Bancroft and Parkman. Often Parrish lets these earlier historians tell most of the tale for him, adding extra personal comment based on his assessment of the primary and secondary sources he chose to consult to create his two histories.

Chapter Two of The Great Plains, titled "The Indians of the Great Plains" touches very briefly on the prehistoric period of the native American, commenting that

yet all those ages had witnessed no more than a slight uplifting from the lowest form of savagery to a rude barbarism. Any serious effort to reveal the secrets of this period would be but wasted energy.¹²

His assessment continues, concerning the "aborigines" and their "unending, fierce and relentless struggle for possession of the Great Plains".¹³ One senses that Parrish had ambivalent feelings about Indians; he apparently admired them as "magnificent warriors, superb

horsemen, loving to struggle with all the ferocity of wild animals," but also he was¹⁴ horrified by their atrocious actions against the white as well as against members of their own race -- "they were as one in their desire to keep back white invasion of their hunting grounds."¹⁵ However, their united front against the white man's invasion proved ineffective, pitted against superior numbers and the white man's superior technology; thus the Indians in many instances literally were killed off, starved out or banished to reservations by the whites. Like the Romantic historians, Parrish too felt that "the Indian was doomed to disappear, as he was not equipped to survive as was the white man."¹⁶ However, Parrish takes the theory a step further when he attributes the demise of some earlier tribes, such as the Mound Builders, to the fact that they had failed to progress sufficiently to ensure their own survival.

these people had emerged from dense savagery ... had attained scarcely higher than the middle status of barbarism. Their religion was still the grossest superstition, and cruel with sacrifice; they possessed little, if any, knowledge of metals, never having learned fusibility, a discovery which is always one of the marked steps of human advancement.¹⁷

Therefore, he seems to be saying that the Indian himself had within him the seeds of his own destruction. For some tribes the doom was apparently self-inflicted with no outside force to hasten the process; such was the case with the Mound Builders.

Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest is suggested, at least in Parrish's assessment of the Indians, all of whom were doomed, destined to disappear because they failed to progress sufficiently out of their savage state.

The question of genocide and the Indians should be considered in their analysis. Were those emigrants, especially those of Anglo-Saxon heritage, bent on genocide in regard to the Indians? No is the answer, probably, at least for those who held to the Romantic view. If Parrish believed in genocide he does not say so; rather he sees that pushing the Indians off their land and even destroying them when necessary was part of the redemption process; the Indian was doomed to disappear anyway.

Parrish writes most vividly of the violent encounters between whites and Indians, but their destruction as a race does not appear to be part of his view of America. Never once does he resort to or even allude to the often used statement: "the only good Indian is a dead one," although he wrote at length about how certain hostile tribes who were constantly at war with whites or other Indians were never to be trusted. However, in spite of the almost entirely negative commentary, Parrish did comment in a positive way on some Indians, such as the case when he wrote about Sacajawea and her husband, Chaboneau, as they aided Lewis and Clark.

Occasionally Parrish does tell the tale from the point of view of the Indian. Chapter X of Historic Illinois tells how the Fox Indians defended themselves at Maramech against the French who had the Indians greatly outnumbered. The Indians staved off the French forces until one night when they had the chance to flee. However, the next morning the French overtook the fugitive Indians, who again tried valiantly to defend themselves but the French killed nearly all of them. Parrish apparently viewed the Indians as "the good guys" for a change, as I

see it, as he writes about the monument erected on the site at

Maramech:

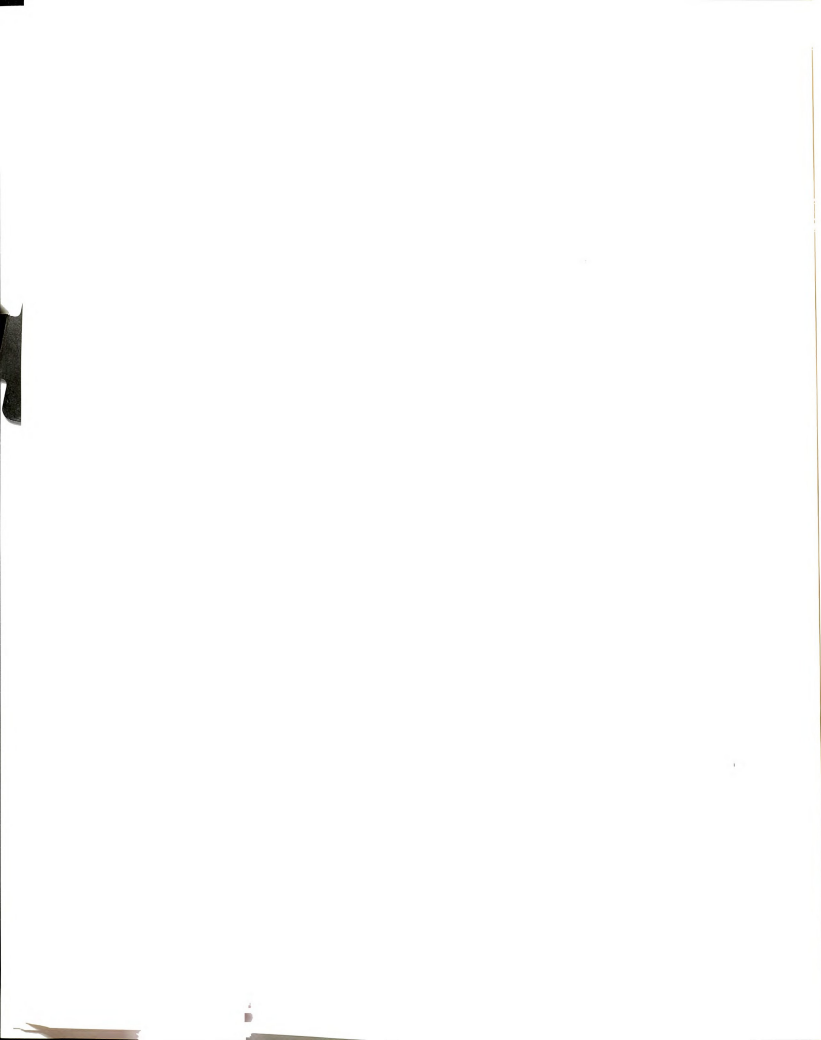
Nothing could be more impressive, for not only does this granite stand there in memory of a brave people and a heroic deed --18

But, overall, Parrish's view is that the Indians were a danger to the exploration and settlement of the land because they were foreign to these emigrants -- in appearance, language and culture. It is little wonder that some white men thought them to be "red devils," but to wipe them out was not necessary as Parrish saw it; they were doomed anyway.

Even when Parrish gives graphic descriptions, such as that the massacre at Fort Dearborn in August of 1812, he apparently did not view the Indians as a race to be wiped out; rather he saw them as an unusually ferocious element in the history of the settlement of the frontier. However, his final statement, concluding the chapter on the Dearborn massacre, he gives the reader reason to believe that Parrish viewed the whole ghastly event with some feeling of vengeance as he writes:

It (the memorial at Chicago) makes a grim foundation-stone upon which to build a mighty city, nor should it be forgotten by the citizens in the passing years.¹⁹

For those who equated redemption with religious freedom, determination to find religious freedom, through redemption and ultimately salvation, was unusually strong. One such group about whom Parrish writes extensively was the Mormons, whose religious fervor was especially intense; Parrish must have been impressed with them as he included much material on them in both books. He describes in detail how they endured incredible hardships, both physical and mental, as



they looked for a place to settle permanently and practice their faith. As Parrish explained, Mormons were so steadfast in their search for a place to settle permanently that they were seldom enticed or diverted by even rumors of gold deposits on the route west; they had no interest in such possible financial gain, except as a serendipity of their "heavenly" pursuit.

The extensive discussions of the Mormons in both of his histories leads me to believe that Parrish viewed these highly dedicated people as especially representative of the American spirit, of (the) "national genius as the creative force underlying historical development".²⁰ Perhaps the fact that many of the Mormons were Anglo-Saxon might have been one of the main reasons that Parrish decided to include such extensive coverage of their journey in his history of the Great Plains. No other group so zealously displayed such religious fervor as they did as they pressed westward searching for a permanent site for their New Jerusalem. Parrish seemed to feel that the Mormons added a splendid and strange dimension to the whole idea of religious freedom and the pursuit thereof; most assuredly no other group sustained such a single-minded intensity of purpose as the Mormons did. The reader wonders why then when their first leader and prophet, Joseph Smith, was murdered, his followers, instead of seeking vengeance, were momentarily stunned and despaired. However, in true Mormon fashion, their faith soon overcame the despair, as Parrish stated it:

... the death of the martyr is the seed of the church
 -- (but) instead of perishing with its prophet, it
 received new life.²¹

As the Mormons moved westward this faith continued to sustain them and "succored them in all their endeavors." They appeared indefatigable indeed. Finally one might suspect that Parrish had been intrigued by the Mormons and admired their tenacity because they, more than most other religious groups, represented the strength of character that typified Americans over the centuries.

In keeping with his adherence to the Romantic theory of history of the 19th century, Parrish strives to be "objective toward the facts of the past"²² but he apparently had ambivalent feelings about the Mormons as he describes in some detail the Mormon's atrocities committed against other emigrant wagon trains as the settlers tried to move into Mormon territory near Salt Lake City, Utah. Although Parrish does not state this explicitly, the reader does get the definite impression that Parrish assesses the Mormons as people who allowed their religious fervor to get out of hand as they dealt so viciously with those who did not believe as they did. Parrish writes of:

arrogant Church officials, ignorant followers, adherants of the Church who seemingly had no fear of punishment, the Utah authorities openly defying the Government at Washington to attempt arrests. When, indeed, the Army forces did arrive and confronted the Mormons, the church members did a complete about face -- no more trouble, but the Mormons who had done these atrocities were never punished, however.²³

Undoubtedly Parrish thought such atrocities merited punishment, but he kept from editorializing and instead used "reports" based on earlier chronicles and thus his point of view regarding the Mormons is revealed.

Other religious groups, in addition to the Mormons, sought religious freedom and/or the opportunity to convert the "heathen" they encountered. One such group which was relentless in the conversion of

the Indians was the Jesuits. Even though they did not usually settle permanently themselves in one place, they made certain that conversion was sufficient in Indian villages before setting out to find other "heathen" to convert and save.

At the conclusion of the chapter, titled "The Footprints of the Friars" Parrish deplores how quickly the influence of the friars was forgotten --

So for a hundred years they toiled, suffered and died,
and today there remain scarcely a memory of their self-
sacrificing labor.²⁴

Parrish realized what an important contribution these brave and remarkable men had made to the formation of the American identity. They, like so many others, brought a sense of purpose to the wilderness as they went about their duty to God.

This fervent proselytizing by Catholic missionaries appears also in one of Parrish's novels Prisoners of Chance, as Father Andre la Fossier near the end of the tale bids farewell to the hero and heroine, declaring he must remain in the wilderness as "'tis mine (his path) to go whithersoever the Lord wills."²⁵ As the heroine protests the priest insists:

My work is not yet done. Upon this symbol (the cross)
I took solemn oath to live and die in faithful service
to the heathen tribes of this river ... only through
such sacrifice (the priest's own) souls may be rescued
from the consuming flames of hell.²⁶

Protestant clergymen were just as fervent in their proselytizing. Parrish viewed them as equally dedicated as the Catholic clergy in his chapter on "The Old-Time Preachers". He says of them:

these early preachers of Illinois performed an
important and necessary work. Their earnestness,
suffering, hardships, and unselfish ministry entitled
them to the world's respect. They inculcated justice

and morality ... drove deep into the consciences of the people the story of the Nazarene ... In charity, in humbleness of life, in abundance of toil, they practiced all they preached.²⁷

Obviously, these men, like their Catholic counterparts contributed greatly to the formation of the American identity as they, too, brought a sense of purpose and pride to the wilderness.

Parrish describes in detail the brave and remarkable men "who buried their talents in the wilderness inspired by religious enthusiasm":

Heroes beyond words ... these pioneers of Christ, upheld by the zeal of faith ... magnificent (in) courage, patience and fortitude ... (they) deserve the applause of the world the "well done" of God.²⁸

Parrish was obviously intrigued with what he called the "peculiar colonies" of the Illinois territory and some parts of the Great Plains, viewing the members thereof as representative of certain interesting and important aspects of the American identity. Even though dissenters had appeared before in America, these numerous Utopian and communal societies were as Parrish termed it, "a special feature of Illinois' growing population".²⁹

Most of these colonies were religion-based -- Parrish remarks:

In many cases religious belief was the principle binding the colony members together, entire churches migrating to this new region (Illinois) bringing their pastors with them.³⁰

Some were not so closely tied to theological denomination; such was the case with the colony founded by Eric Jansen, who abjured the Lutheran Church in his native Sweden and came to Henry County, Illinois, in October of 1846 with some eleven hundred followers. Although Jansen originally determined to run the colony in a socialistic manner, he soon decided otherwise. As a result the colony

broke into two factions and soon separated. The Jansen faction stayed together until Jansen was murdered by the husband of one of the original members. Parrish comments on the Jansen sect thus:

The old buildings at Bishop Hill remain, and many of the old customs to tell the story of a beautiful dream of fraternity which was not practical enough to survive the continued strain of experiment.³¹

Another group Parrish describes were the French Icarians who settled in Nauvoo, Illinois. They, too, split into factions and eventually perished. Apparently, Parrish felt compelled to write about these colonies because they were a positive factor as "they sought earnestly to attain that high ideal of socialism which had originally brought them across the seas".³²

In his two histories Parrish selects the geography, time periods and characters which will best represent to the readers his view of America. For example, in Historic Illinois he sets forth his purpose in the "Introductory" --

The intention of this book is not scholastic ... the single purpose being to render Illinois history of interest to the many who seldom it to be so ... Comparatively few realize that no State of the Union surpasses Illinois in the romantic incidents of early days. These are full of color, action, and adventure, for above these peaceful plains and woods once waved the flags of four contending nations, while men of the white race and the red strove for mastery ... The continual conflict with savagery, the conspiracy of Pontiac, the wars of the Revolution and of 1812, all had their field of battle on Illinois soil; and there is scarcely a county without its romantic legends, its interesting traditions of the past.³³

Parrish's Illinois is thus a microcosm of his America. Most of what took place in the rest of America, he implies, took place in Illinois.

Parrish's admiration for certain groups is apparent, as he often concludes a segment of each chapter with a tribute, as he does with his description of the Overland Trail and the Pony Express:

The tale of suffering, of desperation fighting,
of marvelous endurance, cling yet to every mile from
the Little Blue to Laramie. The dead of those awful
years lie numberless and nameless in their unknown,
scattered graves.³⁴

How does Parrish arrive at his conclusions, his concepts of the America he depicts? Simply the way all of us do, observe, think (sometimes), absorb and eventually come to a conclusion of our own. Parrish's assumptions are often based on his own personal experiences. Since he was a lawyer, a prospector, a newspaper reporter and finally an author, his extensive experiences from his varied occupations add many more dimensions to his view of America.

Often Parrish reveals himself to be a bigot, a racist and an ultra-conservative if one studies his treatment of the various racial and ethnic groups about which he wrote. Nevertheless, the facts remain that Parrish's view of America is undoubtedly more credible and valid than would be the view of someone who had led a more restricted and routine existence. Probably no more so than his times, his views are fairly typical in the contexts of the 19th century. He strove to be candid as he expressed his view of America; this is especially apparent in his two non-fiction works, Historic Illinois and The Great Plains. For example, in the preface to The Great Plains he states his purposes: to bring to the reader a romantic history of the Plains in a single volume.³⁵ This had not been attempted before and it causes one to ponder whether Parrish has been successful within the self-imposed

limits. Most certainly his enthusiasm is not limited as he collected together a multitude of facts from mostly primary sources.

He frequently quotes from the journals of some who actually explored America, such as Cabeza De Vaca, treasurer of the Spanish expedition sent to explore Florida in 1527. Although most of DeVaca's journey was marked with frightful experiences, his journal entry describing the buffalo is interesting and amusing in a way because DeVaca thought they were cattle with strange hairy coats and small horns.³⁶

Others who recorded their observations are Parkman, Lewis and Clark, and lesser known men such as Rufus Sage who wrote on how Brady Island within the Platte River in Nebraska got its name. Another, George P. Belden (called "The White Chief" by the Sioux), wrote of the days of the Sioux uprising of 1863 and the dangers encountered daily, the disagreeable duties of the soldiers as they rode atop the coaches between the stations of the Overland and Express routes.³⁷ Parrish read and used them all. His choice of secondary sources includes such well-known names as George Bancroft, Thwaite, Chittenden, plus a host of others who wrote first hand about America's early days and others who consulted primary sources to create their own histories.

Always Parrish views America in a positive way. For example, through his two histories and his 27 novels he asserts that America from a geographical perspective may become a New World Eden, a Utopia, if the people inhabiting it are virtuous. In the same way he describes the geography of the land, especially the Western Plains, in such magnificent word pictures that the reader joins the explorers, trapper, missionary, soldier, treasure hunter, as they travel

throughout this great country. Parrish wants the reader to experience the feeling of those who traveled and settled America; the reader becomes a traveling companion as Parrish in his two histories skillfully employs the actual words of early explorers and travelers as he includes excerpts from diaries, journals, letters and portions of books written by other historians.

The outlaws of the Illinois territory and the Great Plains were yet another facet of the American identity, negative but important, according to Parrish. For example, at the beginning of his chapter about outlaws (Historic Illinois) Parrish comments on why they showed up in Illinois when they did.

Almost every district of the United States in its earlier days of scant population has been the scene of open crime. Outlaws, fleeing in desperation from the restraints of civilization, where enforcement of law has become methodical, find in the wilderness a certain license for carrying on of their nefarious trade.³⁸

From Parrish's point of view apparently the outlaw was a natural outgrowth of the developing nation -- a symbol of the evil in us all, concentrated. Although Parrish never glorifies "their nefarious deeds trade," he described in vivid detail some of their acts of violence and how they often went unpunished until "popular sentiment became too strong."³⁹

Parrish comments also on how common it was to glorify the acts of the outlaws and how people in general are so naturally curious about horrible events and hideous crimes. Parrish's view on this human response to the morbid in life brought by the outlaws was that

(it) would afford most interesting reading could fact and fiction only be satisfactorily divorced so that real history be born.⁴⁰

In Chapter XXVIII, "Border Outlawry", Parrish takes the opportunity to present yet another facet of the American identity, the vigilante groups which grew up, called the Regulators. These groups in their desperation to rid the Illinois territory of outlaws often were as violent or more so than the outlaws themselves.

In order to maintain one's mental well-being, humor is often the answer; the old maxim that laughter is the best medicine apparently was as true in the early days of America as it is today. Parrish undoubtedly recognized the significance of humor in the development of the American identity since he devotes a chapter to it in his Historic Illinois. He defines frontier humor thus:

Frontier humor is quite apt to prove of the boisterous kind, finding its more common expression in rude practical jokings and horse-play.⁴¹

How did such crude, rough humor come about? Parrish answers that question:

Refinement seldom dwells between log walls, and those who invade new lands, fronting daily peril, and breasting the hardships of a wilderness then must conquer, have little time to waste on the small amenities of life. They meet things in the rough, and the seriousness of their environment inevitably stamps itself on countenance and manner.⁴²

He seems to sense that the rough humor of the frontier was necessarily thus; how better to let off steam, alleviate anxieties and enjoy a laugh especially at the expense of someone else?

Parrish views this sense of humor of the early settlers of Illinois as innate. The hijinks of days past still make the modern readers smile as "we contemplate those happenings of the long ago."⁴³ Parrish presents vivid scenes of political candidates orating before yokels, providing them with free liquor to garner their votes, jokes

on newlyweds, religious gatherings where some prankster resorted to practical jokes during solemn prayers, absurd tales such as the one in Prairie du Rocher where a Negro was charged with the murder of a hog⁴⁴ -- on and on the nonsense goes.

Finally what is Parrish's view of America? Its identity? Who influenced him in his writing of romantic history? How does Parrish arrive at his conclusions? Certainly Parrish's own experiences helped mold his views; his background as reporter, lawyer, and prospector were invaluable as he had frequently experienced first hand some of the same things that his forebears had and wrote about. Thus he brings vividness to all that he wrote. Furthermore, he wanted his history to be interesting. He stated in the introductory of his history of Illinois that

the single purpose being to render Illinois history
of interest to the many who seldom discover it to be
so.⁴⁵

Such directness is refreshing and the reader accepts the challenge to find "history of interest." He kept his own subjective commentary to a minimum and he chose subjects that keep the reader interested such as famous outlaws, frontier humor, and exciting moments involving Indians and settlers moving westward.

Parrish captures the reader's interest in other ways as he describes the geography of the Midwest and Great Plains; sometimes the sunset on the dawn is a focal point, at other times the reader "accompanies" the settlers as they ford a stream where the current is treacherous. Perhaps the most intriguing scenes, however, are those of snow glutted mountain passes as settlers and Indians alike fall victim to nature's wrath. Parrish embellishes some scenes with poignant

descriptions; for instance, the aftermath of a raid on an Indian village:

the soldiers finally captured the (Indian) village; they found there the body of Mrs. White, yet warm, with three arrows in her breast. No trace of either the child or the colored nurse was ever found.⁴⁶

Then a scene after an Indian attack on an army train:

(from Colonel Dodge's first hand account regarding Amos Chapman, an army scout)

"Amos, you are badly hurt," said Dixon. Amos replied, "No, I am not." "Why, look at your leg." (Amos looked at his leg.) And sure enough, the leg was shot off just above the ankle joint, and I had been walking on the bone dragging the foot behind me, and in the excitement I never knew it, nor have I had any pain in my leg to this day.⁴⁷

In these two passages the reader is at the spot, observing with Parrish, the reporter, who covers the event and the human condition in technicolor.

In both of Parrish's histories his view of America is for the most part positive, because the emigrants about whom he wrote were themselves positive in their thinking and actions. Therefore, the character of America, its identity, is essentially the character of the inhabitants. The reader senses that Parrish admired, respected, and truly celebrated those who came to America to explore, settle and define a way of life. He wrote glowingly of the great faith, motivations, strength, courage and determination of these hardy souls who refused to be deterred; he marvels at their perseverance, comments on their insightful leaders, and extols both even while conceding their shortcomings. I am convinced that one additional purpose of Parrish's was to instill in his readers, an admiration and respect for their forebears. Thus he might, in turn, instill also in the living

some measure of the faith, courage, determination, and motivation that their forebears displayed.

Endnotes

- ¹Russel B. Nye, Society and Culture, p. 103.
- ²Russel B. Nye, George Bancroft, History and Biography, p. 140.
- ³Randall Parrish, The Great Plains, dedication.
- ⁴Ibid., p. viii, preface.
- ⁵Ibid., p. 382.
- ⁶Nye, George Bancroft, p. 117.
- ⁷Ibid., p. 117.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 118.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰Ibid.
- ¹¹Ibid.
- ¹²Parrish, p. 29.
- ¹³Ibid.
- ¹⁴Ibid., p. 40.
- ¹⁵Ibid.
- ¹⁶Russel B. Nye, "Parkman, Red Fate and White Civilization", from C. Gohdes (ed.), Essays on American Literature, in Honor of Jay B. Hubbell, pp. 152-153.
- ¹⁷Randall Parrish, Historic Illinois, p. 16.
- ¹⁸Parrish, Historic Illinois, p. 149.
- ¹⁹Ibid., p. 239.
- ²⁰Nye, Society and Culture, p. 103.
- ²¹Parrish, Historic Illinois, p. 278.
- ²²Nye, Society and Culture, p. 104.

- ²³Parrish, Historic Illinois, p. 280.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 101.
- ²⁵Randall Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 420.
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷Parrish, Historic Illinois, pp. 389-390.
- ²⁸Ibid., pp. 88-89.
- ²⁹Parrish, Historic Illinois, p. 345.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 345.
- ³¹Ibid., p. 53.
- ³²Ibid., p. 358.
- ³³Ibid., pp. vii, viii.
- ³⁴Parrish, The Great Plains, p. 214.
- ³⁵Ibid., preface vii.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 37.
- ³⁷Ibid., p. 211.
- ³⁸Parrish, Historic Illinois, p. 400.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 400.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 401.
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 359.
- ⁴²Ibid.
- ⁴³Ibid.
- ⁴⁴Ibid.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., vii (introduction).
- ⁴⁶Parrish, The Great Plains, p. 206.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 364.

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CHAPTER III

Prisoners of Chance as Representative of All of Parrish's Novels

Prisoners of Chance gives clear evidence that, in his fiction as well as in his histories, Parrish was influenced by the 19th Century European Romantic theory of history. In America this theory emphasized the ideas of national spirit, the idealistic course of progress, and the evidence of the Creator in all events, but added the sense of mission to do God's will and often to gain materially as well.

R. B. Nye defines the theory thus in his Society and Culture in America:

Early nineteenth-century American historical theory, then, drawing from both rationalist and Romantic sources, was marked by these traits: an attitude of objectivity towards the facts of the past, asking for impartiality and freedom from preconception; a belief in progress, buttressed by transcendental idealism and reinforced by the rationalist faith in an upward social tendency; the recognition of a master plan or controlling scheme behind the shifting facts of history; an interest in the evolution of national institution, leading to an emphasis upon "national genius" as the creative force underlying historical development.¹

Prisoners of Chance best represents Parrish's achievement in historical fiction. He appeals to the reader's imagination by vividly recreating the past, and by incorporating romance, mystery, adventure and suspense into his narrative. His technique includes colorful characterization, a vivid style, and careful research into the particular period about which he writes. One of his

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characteristic devices in Prisoners of Chance, as in many of his stories, is the use of the first person; thus, Parrish invites the reader to participate directly in his adventures. He adds another dimension to this particular tale by revealing in the preface that it is based on "fact", on the life of a real Geoffrey Benteen who lived in New Orleans circa 1769 and who saved the lady fair and even her husband, from the Spanish. Unfortunately, Parrish's claim cannot be substantiated.

After reading the introduction in Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter one speculates about Parrish's own claim that his tale Prisoners of Chance is based on fact.² One can assume, however, that Parrish probably read The Scarlet Letter. Since he used themes in his novels that had been used by other authors, such as Dumas, Dickens and Twain, it is more than likely that he adapted a mysterious story he had uncovered; then, like Hawthorne, he decided that a "true" tale would sell better. He was correct.

The story of Prisoners of Chance is as follows: Geoffrey Benteen, borderman and gentleman, adventurer of the Louisiana Province circa 1770, heeds the plea of his former sweetheart whom he never forgot, Eloise Lafreniere. She is now married to Charles de Noyan and she asks Benteen to find Charles, who was taken captive and imprisoned on a ship by the Spanish during one of the many naval battles between the French and Spanish in Louisiana. Benteen accepts the challenge and arranges to help DeNoyan escape. Benteen, Eloise, and DeNoyan flee northward up the Mississippi, running from the pursuing Spaniards who had imprisoned Charles. During this flight the three encounter a strange man named Puritan. Shortly thereafter

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the party is captured by the Natchez Indians, a cult of Sun worshippers headed by a sinister woman, Naladi. During their captivity they meet one more man, a priest named Father Andre. Near the end of the tale Charles and Puritan are killed. Charles' death leaves Eloise free to marry Benteen, whom she had always loved.

The story begins in October 1768 near the port of New Orleans. The Spanish and the French are at war over control of the Louisiana Province which had been founded by a Frenchman named Bienville in 1705. However, the authorities in 1768 planned to turn over the yet struggling colony into the control of the King of Spain at the direction of the French king.

The Frenchmen in control of commercial interests in 1768 object vehemently to such a change in leadership, especially under another country. The French who stand to lose, such as the heroine's father, Lafreniere and her husband, Charles de Noyan, were already part of a council which voiced objections to Spanish rule.

New Orleans was not the only scene of unrest in America in 1769; it was apparent everywhere in the colonies as "foreign" elements sought to control the activities of the colonists. In New England, the colonists were rebelling against England, especially against such acts as the Stamp Act and the Sugar Act. As Parrish indicates in his preface to Prisoners of Chance, the council in New Orleans was against restriction of trade rather than for more altruistic reasons.

This passage is particularly representative of Parrish's style in Prisoners of Chance, indeed in all of his books.

Moving within the silence of spectres, their bodies
draped in shapeless robes, appearing ghostlike beneath

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the uncertain flickering of flames, moved forward like a great writhing snake ... robed in black from throat to sandals, (they) slaughtered animals beneath the frowning shadow of the huge winged dragon, pouring warm blood over the stones of the altar, or smearing it upon their faces. Then ... (these) revolting figures began with wild chanting to make offerings to their gods, dancing and capering before the flame to an accompaniment of dismal music, burning some incense which polluted the air.³

It is characteristic of Parrish in that it reveals the metaphorical language, the sensual and implicit imagery on which he relies to entice his readers. His detailed descriptions are meant to heighten the anxiety and excitement of the particular moment he is describing. Although at times Parrish is verbose; this seems a lesser flaw in light of the overall impact and excitement generated by his tale.

As with all of his books, Prisoners of Chance contains vivid imagery and figurative language. The passage above provides an illustration, as this lengthy description creates an atmosphere of terror, mystery and suspense which appeals to the imagination rather than the reason of the reader.

At this point in the tale the little party, while fleeing the Spaniards, takes off on foot "east and north, following as straight a trail as possible until we find the great river (Mississippi) after being forced off the river earlier due to a rapids and resulting damage to the boat." While following a narrow path the group blunders into a strange area "darkened by the closing in of a gloomy mountain heights upon either side." Trying to find an exit they stumble upon the stronghold of the Natchez Indians. As they try to escape they find themselves unable to do so for they are surrounded by cliffs, vast walls of rock. When the first night falls

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they realize that they are inside an altar room where they observe the strange and horrifying rituals of the Natchez.

The terror, mystery and suspense the hero experiences is shared by the reader also. Parrish uses alliteration most effectively, e.g. "silence of spectres, flickering of flames,"⁴ as he heightens the emotions. His use of similes is effective also as the shadowy "bodies draped in shapeless robes"⁵ take on the appearance of "a great writhing snake" revealed against the backdrop of "flickering flames"⁶ and gloomy interior of the altar room. Even the ordinarily stable, calm and logical hero, Benteen, professes that "it was a hellish scene ... it preyed upon our strained nerves."⁷ He continues,

It was by exercising the greatest effort of will that I conquered the dread sense of utter hopelessness ... I must retain mind and strength to act like a man.⁸

Parrish's purpose, therefore, is to intrigue the reader for if an unusually calm and logical man such as the hero is unnerved, then apparently there is good reason for the terror, mystery and suspense.

At this point in Prisoners of Chance one is reminded of Poe's Fall of the House of Usher in its use of similar techniques to intrigue and captivate the reader. For example, the use of the first person, the usually stable hero narrator, the use of the dark or nearly dark surroundings, the use of the unknown which obscures a clear view for the narrator, thus adding to the terror, mystery and suspense.

The "half-smothered torches in the oppressive atmosphere of the vault"⁹ in the Poe tale are similar to the "flickering flames" and burning incense which "polluted the air"¹⁰ of Parrish's tale. Poe's

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hero speaks of being "overpowered by the intense sentiment of horror, unaccountable yet unendurable"¹¹ again similar to Parrish's hero when he says:

For never have I felt such uncontrollable horror as that which for the moment, fairly paralyzed me in brain and limb. It is the mysterious that appalls brave men...¹²

Terror, mystery and suspense continue from the beginning of Chapter XIX (19) until near the conclusion of the tale. Parrish seeks to sustain the feelings of terror, mystery and suspense as the hero and his group are vaulted from one strange experience to another.

Parrish uses other techniques, such as intensely melodramatic situations where emotions run high. Even in the opening scenes the hero, Benteen, waxes nostalgic about his family background, his reasons for fleeing the bustle of New Orleans because of a misunderstanding with his sweetheart.

My father was that Robert Benteen merchant in furs ... his influence among the tribesmen (Indians) extended to the eastern mountains. My mother was of Spanish blood, so I grew up fairly proficient in three languages. The early death of my mother compelled me to become companion to my father in his wanderings, so that before I was seventeen the dim forest trails, the sombre rivers and the dark lodges of the savages had grown as familiar to me as were the streets and houses of my native town.¹³

None of this is in the tradition of 20th century realism.

Emotions figure greatly in his descriptions throughout the book. In the first chapter he pictures the port of New Orleans during September 1769, a period of transition from French to Spanish rule. His description of the unwelcome soldiers and sailors who

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drank to excess and became "boisterous and quarrelsome from liquor"¹⁴ gives the reader a sense of the surroundings.

Parrish's attempts to make his tale more vivid by including lengthy descriptive passages often phrased in language that is archaic and stilted by twentieth century standards. It is melodramatic, emotional and often pretentious. However, in this tale of the late eighteenth century such metaphorical language is not out of place. In fact, it embellishes and enhances the narrative, somehow giving it an aura of credibility not possible without it. Lines such as these spoken by the hero early on in the tale, reveal this particular aspect of Parrish's style:

His face was a picture of disinterested earnestness as he fronted me; yet I hesitated, eyeing him closely, half inclined to think him the unsuspecting representative of some rogue. That was a time and place where one of my birth needed to practice caution -- ¹⁵

Shortly thereafter, the hero meets Eloise's family priest, Father Cassati, for the first time and when the priest speaks the reader is drawn instantly into another era because the language is archaic: "Thou hast responded with much promptitude."¹⁶ He always uses the uncommon word instead of the more common: stentorian, prate, durst, badinage.¹⁷

Other words stand out as being archaic, for perhaps Parrish's intent was to give his tale the elite, sophisticated tone that might convey to the reader a sense of the period of which he wrote, when language for some classes was more formal than for others.

Another explanation might be that Parrish hoped to attract readers with this archaic and stilted vocabulary as the words need more attention, at least momentarily, thus the reader must take a

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more careful look and listen more intently to the language seldom used in the twentieth century. Some of this stiltedness may be the result of "translation" from French into English or English to Spanish. Other examples include the use of "'tis" and "'twas."¹⁸

Others are more lengthy:

Stop, or I'll drive into you a leaden slug to silence
that blundering tongue of yours for good and all. (hero
re: Puritan)

Did you mistake this for a conventicle ... an assembly
of crop-eared worshippers, that you venture to lift
your voice in such a howl when you wake?

Commandant to Benteen (in disguise): To whom do you
go at such unseemly hour with ghostly consolations?¹⁹

Parrish's copious use of foreign words lends yet another dimension, a cosmopolitan effect, to the narrative. For example, when DeNoyan cries out, "Francais, Francais,"²⁰ to the Natchez it not only causes the reader to halt momentarily as he quickly translates the word into English, but also causes him to wonder momentarily why DeNoyan uses that particular word. The reason is soon revealed and the reader discovers that the Natchez had had previous earlier encounters with the French and the French had killed many of their tribe; thus DeNoyan's use had special meaning.

Parrish develops his use of imagery throughout Prisoners of Chance to facilitate character development. One example is Benteen's assessment of Eloise soon after he has effected her husband's escape from the prison ship. Benteen observes that the fragile little girl was being forced into "a higher womanhood" due to the events of the previous night, and Eloise sits facing Benteen in the boat he observes:

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It was a sadder, graver face than the one I associated with her girlhood. Yet I could scarcely forbear an impression that it was now a sweeter one, more womanly, faint lines beginning to mark its satin smoothness with impress of sorrow. To my thought a new, higher womanhood had found birth within, during weary days and nights of suspense and suffering.²¹

Benteen's description of DeNoyan is not so complimentary; he says of him:

He is changeable, somewhat overbearing in speech, not sober of mind as I am accustomed to find men.²²

Parrish had a particularly good opportunity to convey his feelings and those of much of the American population through his writings. It is safe to assume that probably Parrish used stereotypes just as other authors do. In Prisoners of Chance as well as other of his tales, he most often calls Indians "savages" and "heathens", and Blacks "slow" and "superstitious". Since his hero is Anglo-Saxon, he is very much aware that the French and Spanish are not happy with the success of the English trade in New Orleans, as they are quarreling over authority of the port at New Orleans.

The two clergymen in the tale, Father Andre and Puritan, are spared criticism as they are defenders of the faith, but one suspects Benteen tolerates them for other reasons also as they are sturdy and unafraid of the Indians. At several points in the tale Benteen becomes disgusted with Puritan's constant religious talk, but Parrish does not criticize Father Andre for any religious verbalizing he does. This causes one to wonder if Parrish might have had more tolerance for Catholicism; however, since Parrish does allow his hero to malign the Spanish papists, this causes the reader to wonder if Parrish differentiated between Catholics depending on ethnic origins.

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It is soon apparent that Benteen has a strict moral code to which he adheres and expects others to do likewise. This moral code is clearly appropriate to Parrish's heroes, a modification of the chivalric code of Western Europe of earlier times.

Early in the tale Benteen reiterates his loyalty to his countrymen, the English, and to others whom he has learned to trust because of close association. Thus when Eloise begs him to save her husband he responds positively although he is devastated to learn that she is married; he repeats his vow to her from five years before: "My life is at your command."²³ He does admit to thinking,

It would be such an easy thing for me to promise her,
to appear to do my very best -- and fail.²⁴

Figurative language is used extensively at this point, for instance when Benteen describes the scene within the cave used for devil worship by the Natchez as he watches two Indians involved in a strange ritualistic dance:

Appearing to my affrighted eyes the gigantic form of two men strangely merged into one, there uprose on that summit a figure so odd, weird, and grimly fantastic, it was small wonder I gazed, never thinking it could be other than the Evil One. It was unclothed from head to heel, and gleaming ghastly white beneath the moonbeams ... nor did this horrid figure remain one moment still ... it would leap high into the air ... even appearing to float bodily forth ... to disappear instantly like some phantom of imagination ... yet ever returning, the same unnatural, spectral figure, wildly gyrating upon the air, leering down upon our speechless misery ... the devilish thing did charm me as a snake does a bird.²⁵

Over and over again throughout the tale Benteen continues to look out for Charles de Noyan, Eloise's husband, but often wondering why he is doing it.

Not once does Benteen try to encourage Eloise to leave Charles, although he treats her often less tenderly than Benteen thinks he

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should. Only when Charles is bewitched by Naladi, the wicked queen of the Natchez, does Benteen become sufficiently exasperated to call Naladi a harlot. He and Charles nearly come to an actual duel but Benteen determines not to fight -- as Charles is Eloise's husband and Benteen has vowed to save him even if it means losing Eloise in the process. Benteen expresses it thus:

I know not why I failed to strike the fellow down. My hand was hard on the knife hilt within my doublet yet I drew it not as we stood there eye to eye. There was that between us -- the dim, shadowy face of a woman -- which held me as by a chain.²⁶

Benteen's values focus quite often on a belief in God, but just as often he expresses his distrust with organized religion, especially if he thinks it lacks sincerity. For example, when Benteen is asked to come to a lady's residence and he is met first by a priest, Benteen makes a snide remark:

I suppose you are the "lady" desiring speech with me; I note you come dressed in character.²⁷

Just prior to the encounter Benteen admits that he as an American borderman "experienced an American borderer's dislike and distrust for his (the priest's) class".²⁸

His imagery describing the priest is vivid,

I came suddenly face to face with a Capuchin priest appearing almost ghastly with his long, pale, ascetic countenance and ghostly gray robe sweeping to the floor. (I was) startled by this unexpected apparition.²⁹

Later in the tale Benteen reacts just as sharply to Ezekial Cairnes, (Puritan) as he cannot tolerate his incessant talking. One such incident is when Puritan starts yelling about how he will deal with the Natchez priest the group has just encountered. Benteen threatens him,

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Be still, you red-headed Connecticut fool ... stop, or I'll drive into you a leaden slug to silence that blundering tongue of yours for good and all ... it will be better if you learn to keep still at such a time, if you hope to companion with me.³⁰

Even so, Benteen realizes it is useless to argue with such a fanatic.

Parrish thus creates and sustains reader interest in a number of ways. He uses the first person narrative, he introduces the mystery and the dilemma in the first chapter, he creates obstacles that only a courageous man could overcome, he supplies colorful characters through detailed description and imagery, and he places all this in an interesting historic setting.

First, Parrish introduces Benteen, the hero, a man of the forest who is summoned by his former sweetheart to save her husband, destined to be hanged at sunrise. This particular situation is reminiscent of some of James Fenimore Cooper's plots as well as of Dickens' Tale of Two Cities. Benteen rises to the challenge and removes the husband, DeNoyan, from the enemy ship. Then comes a further challenge, as Benteen, Eloise, and her husband flee the Spanish pursuers up the Mississippi from New Orleans.

On the journey north the group is taken prisoner by a strange tribe of Indians, the Natchez. Parrish invites the reader to encounter along with the characters this colorful and strange tribe who inhabited the shores along the Mississippi and Arkansas Rivers and who eventually met extinction "amid the shadows ... upon the banks of the Ocatohoola."³¹

Even more strange is the fact that the tribe at the point of their introduction in the tale is led by a woman, a white woman of

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French heritage named Naladi. The reader might question such a set of circumstances, a white woman governing a tribe of Indians, but the Natchez did inhabit the Mississippi valley; they were known as expert potters and weavers and were regarded by their colonial observers as a superior Indian tribe. More importantly they supported a strong caste system which forbade intermarriage.³²

Naladi is more than a leader of a strange tribe; she is the consummate villainess; there is no one more evil than this "dark lady," this sinister Gothic woman. More assuredly, at least in Parrish's other fiction, there is no one who even comes close to matching the flamboyant character of Queen Naladi.

Like a great cat she prefers playing with her mice before killing ... (she was) a tall, fair-skinned woman, having dignity of command in every movement, her face thin, strong, dominant, with large, dark, passionate eyes, flashing in scornful beauty ... pride, power, imperious will, a scarcely hidden tigerish cruelty, were in every line of her features; yet she remained strikingly handsome, with that rare beauty which drives men mad and laughs mockingly at its victims. She was robed completely in red, the brilliant color harmonizing strangely with her countenance ... her magnificent wealth of hair, of richest reddish gold, appeared to shimmer and glow in the sparkle of leaping flames as if she wore a tiara of rubies.³³

Naladi reminds one of other evil women; for example, of the red-haired villainess, Milady in Dumas' The Three Musketeers, who too leads many men to destruction. In her lust for power, Naladi also resembles Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth. Like Lady Macbeth, Naladi deceives, enslaves and corrupts men in order to achieve the power and position she seeks. In creating this intensely evil, unrepentent villainess, Parrish probably incorporated many of the wicked traits of the numerous villainesses of literature.

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As this portion of the story unfolds, the reader realizes that, temporarily at least, Naladi's authority is being questioned by her followers and she is struggling to regain command "with quick, passionate speech." She rails at "the savage throng who shrink before her, as if they knew and dreaded the outburst of her anger."³⁴

The fleeing party meets with one obstacle after another. The pace is rapid, although Parrish does at intervals allow brief lulls in the action while the hero ponders the problem of the moment, almost as if he wants his reader to have time to catch his breath while the hero catches his. However, even in the quieter moments there is a sense of urgency in one example, Benteen is totally fatigued yet so concerned about Eloise that he wants to be sure she is safe (she is imprisoned within Naladi's quarters) before he, himself, sleeps. This involves a treacherous route via a cave, a respite allows the reader not only time to ponder the current crisis, but also time to anticipate what next awaits the hero and his party.

Again, in the concluding paragraphs of Chapter XIX the little group is trying to work its way along a treacherous narrow foot-path in an effort to ascend a rocky wall. During their tortuous trek they discover that a portion of the rock mass has fallen, cutting off their route. Benteen says:

We stood there stupified, staring into each others' despairing faces, feeling we were hopeless prisoners doomed to perish miserably within the gloomy confines of that ghastly, haunted hell.³⁵

In addition, these respites frequently allow for some explanation of a situation heretofore considered a mystery. The best example of this is "The Tale of the Priest" in which Father Andre

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reveals the terrible story of his earlier relationship with Naladi in France some years earlier. This is probably for most readers the most satisfying of the explanations, since until then the readers is almost tempted to believe Naladi's declaration that she is as she says:

the Daughter of the Sun ... These (the Natchez)
are my children, given unto me by the great Sun-god.³⁶

Of course, there are other suspenseful moments in the ebb and flow of the action, such as the trial of the group by the Natchez. Parrish opens Chapter XXIII, titled "The Vote of Death", with Benteen's fearful declaration:

I have already written that I was never easily affected by supernatural fears, yet something about that grim entrance chilled the very blood.³⁷

Parrish continues -- "in from the dark night there stalked in solemn silence and dignity a long line of stalwart savages." The extensive use of alliteration intensifies the frightening image for the reader and the verbosity is overlooked.

One must conclude that Parrish was extremely successful in creating in Prisoners of Chance, given the kind of book it was, indeed in all of his novels, a pattern of movement with a rhythm of action that creates in the reader feelings of suspense, intrigue, curiosity, fear and fantasy. He created for his reading audience as Ernest Leisy states it -- "literature which takes one away from where he is and brings him back refreshed."³⁸

There will be frequent indications in this study that Parrish was influenced by his own experiences, his love of writing, the works of other authors and possibly painters of the American 19th century. Particularly, Parrish was inspired by the works of earlier

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authors such as Dumas, Cooper, Dickens, Poe and Twain. This is especially evident in Prisoners of Chance, as Parrish has "used" some aspects of each author's work in this tale.

Early on the reader is aware of Geoffrey Benteen's similarity to Cooper's Natty Bumppo. The description of Benteen's garments is reminiscent of Bumppo's; "a hunter of the woods, attired in rough habiliments." Like Bumppo, he leans upon his rifle, as he converses with Eloise's servant. Benteen too has been "buried in the forest all these years." He admits that "I loved the free, wild life of the warriors with whom I hunted ... and had learned to distrust but my own race."³⁹ Benteen, like Bumppo, felt more at ease and even more secure in the forest. Benteen admits that he went initially to the woods as a companion to his father, who was a fur merchant, and chose to return there even after his father's death. He states it, as Natty might:

(After my father's death) although he left to my care considerable property and a widely scattered trade, I could not content myself with the sameness of New Orleans; there I felt almost a stranger, ever hungering for the woods and the free life of the mountains ... the dim forest trails, the sombre rivers and the dark lodges of savages (which) had grown familiar to me.⁴⁰

There is an at least partial similarity between Naladi and Dumas' dark lady, Milady (The Three Musketeers). Both women come from humble beginnings, are power mad and greedy, and users of men, whom they almost hypnotize with their evil spells. Each woman seduces a member of the clergy and each convinces the man that she has been wronged by other men. This results in each man sacrificing his honor for love of the wicked woman. Although Milady does not become a queen as Naladi does, both women blaspheme against God and

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both pay with their lives. Each woman is described as unusually beautiful, with a magnetism most men cannot resist. Parrish, like Dumas, describes his villainess as red-haired, the hair so full it is almost alive, thus giving each woman an added startling evil aspect, as red is often associated with the devil.

Parrish perhaps read Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities, as he incorporates one situation from that story, with modifications, into Prisoners of Chance. That is where Sidney Carton, the hero, sacrifices his life for the husband of the woman he loves. Benteen offers to do likewise to save Charles de Noyan. Instead, Benteen helps the husband escape with him.

Over the years Parrish might very well have read some of the classic tales such as The Three Musketeers, The Deerslayer, and A Tale of Two Cities, as the similarities in Parrish's tales to those stories of Cooper, Dumas, and Dickens are pronounced enough to suggest this.

Judging by the great number of historical novels, plus the two histories that Parrish wrote, one can see that he was influenced by a love of history, especially American history. In Prisoners of Chance, for instance, he weaves a strange tale which includes several racial and ethnic groups. Parrish's hero, Benteen, is the product of an English father and a Spanish mother and lives much of his early life in New Orleans, which was heavily populated with French and Spanish as well as many blacks, mostly slaves. As a young man, Benteen lives among the Creek and Shawnees when he first accompanies his father on fur trading trips and later goes alone.

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It is reasonable to assume that in this story Parrish relied heavily on the attitudes he presumed to be commonly held by the inhabitants of the region of Louisiana province circa 1769. If Parrish allowed his own bias to creep into this story, it is probably because his views were similar to those of the society he wrote about. For this story the only way that Parrish draws from his own experience (as a reporter) is to give the reader a carefully prepared report taken from a manuscript Parrish said "came into his possession." Parrish's narrative at times reads much like a melodrama. The chapter titles read much like headlines: "Backs to the Wall," "The Stronghold of the Natchez," "Prisoners in the Temple", "The Dead Bury Their Dead."

When one considers some of the detailed descriptions in the tale, such as those of the forests, shorelines, and Indians, one might speculate that Parrish was influenced by 19th century American painters, particularly by the Hudson River school. In reading Parrish's vivid pictures of the coming dawn over the shoreline near the bay at New Orleans one thinks of the paintings of some of those artists who painted shore and sea with oils instead of words.

There was a slight, scarcely perceptible shading into a lighter tinge of the clinging black shadows that veiled the eastern sky, dimly revealing misty outlines of white, fleecy clouds extending above the faint horizon line, until they assumed spectral brightness ... Gently the delicate awakening spread along the wider expanse of sky, which became bluish gray, gradually expanding and reflecting its glow along the water ... The east became gradually a lighter, more pronounced gray; rosy streaks shot upward through the cloud masses, driving them higher into an ever-deepening upper blue like a flock of frightened birds, until at last the whole eastern horizon blushed like a red rose ...⁴¹

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How like a painting this passage is, especially some of the landscapes by artists as Winslow Homer, Fitz Hugh Lane, Frederick Church, Albert Bierstadt, and Asher B. Durand. The colors, the images, the intense feelings flow from Parrish's word picture just as they flow from the picture painted in oils. There is no proof that Parrish was influenced by America's artists of the nineteenth century, but the possibility exists. One cannot fail to see how the emotional attitudes of the Romantic movement of nineteenth century art, especially landscape painting, are reflected also in the early twentieth century images Parrish created.

The narrator of this tale, Prisoners of Chance, Geoffrey Benteen, is also the protagonist; his words exude self-confidence, determination and dedication. Parrish retells the tale using the words of Benteen's "manuscript", stating in the foreword that Benteen was:

the man who alone could tell the strange story was in old age impelled to do so by a feeling of sacred duty to the dead.⁴²

Why Benteen felt impelled to describe his adventures is not revealed but one can speculate that something may have happened that triggered the memories of half a century earlier. This manuscript according to Parrish was:

disarranged, ill-written, already yellowed by years ... I submit them without change, save only as to subdivision into chapters, with an occasional substitution for some old-time phrase of its more modern equivalent.⁴³

Benteen wrote of his adventures 48 years after the events. Presumably he was about 78 at the time as he was nearly 30 when the adventures took place.

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The first lines of the story let the reader know that Benteen is proud of of himself and his heritage. He calls himself a "Gentleman Adventurer, with much experience upon the border."⁴⁴ His English father was a fur merchant; his mother of Spanish descent. Benteen announces also his proficiency in English, Spanish, and French as well as in "an odd medley of tribal tongues which often stood me in excellent stead amid the vicissitudes of the frontier."⁴⁵

Throughout the tale Benteen appears confident of himself even though he does admit to wandering aimlessly in the woods of Ohio and Illinois for five years prior to the opening of the tale. This wandering was due to the breakup of his romance with Eloise; he says:

Five years previously, heartsick and utterly careless of life, I had plunged into the trackless wilderness ... desiring merely to be left alone.⁴⁶

However, his attitude changes dramatically at the moment of reunion with Eloise. Even though Benteen is aghast when Eloise asks him to save her husband he promises quickly to try a rescue. He is strangely revived; he states it thus:

Any call to action, of either hazard or pleasure, steadies my nerves. To realize necessity for doing renders me a new man, clear of brain, quick of decision.⁴⁷

From this point on his confidence continues, although he does occasionally state that he feels momentary lack of faith in himself. For example, when Eloise tells him the circumstances of her husband's imprisonment he experiences misgivings about his ability to rescue DeNoyan from the heavily-guarded Spanish vessel. Benteen says:

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The longer I gazed upon that floating fortress of despotic Spanish power -- the more desperate appeared my mission.⁴⁸

But he recovers his courage quickly and remarks:

Yet I was not one to forego an enterprise lightly because of difficulty of danger -- ⁴⁹

Once aboard the Spanish vessel he thinks to himself:

The very touch of those deck planks to my feet put new recklessness into my blood, causing me to marvel at the perfection of my own fool play. (Benteen is masquerading as a Negro at this point.)⁵⁰

Benteen also informs the reader that his courage has come about through necessity as the English in New Orleans were few and, because they achieved commercial supremacy, the French and Spanish, who outnumbered them, were jealous. Thus when the black approached Benteen on his first day back in New Orleans with a message from a lady and friend from earlier days, Benteen hastens to be of service. He thinks:

If some friend really needed me, a question of duty was involved which I was never one to shun; for who could know in how brief a space I might also be asking assistance of some countryman.⁵¹

Much later in the tale Benteen acts as a "historian" by revealing the story of the Natchez. This history and personal encounter with the Indians often called the Mound Builders covers over 200 pages of the story which includes a detailed description of the Mound Builders' history as well as their current condition. Evidently, the narrator Benteen decided that such coverage was necessary in light of his bizarre adventure involving them. Parrish indicates in his foreword this was one of the two reasons that Benteen has recorded the tale even after nearly half a century; he felt compelled to do so.

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The hero informs the reader early on that this tale of his happened "just forty-eight years ago as I write -- it was in September of the year 1769"⁵² -- thus his memory must have been very good or else he has "recreated" his experiences, enhancing them, and romanticizing them; for the story is vivid, not the rambling reminiscences of a man almost 80.

Parrish says he double-checked Benteen's manuscript and it was more fact than fiction; he states in the foreword:

A chance reading revealed a certain historical basis; then, making note of correspondences in minor details, I realized that what I had cast aside as mere fiction might possess a substantial foundation of fact ... I have compared his (Benteen's) narrative with all we moderns have learned regarding them (the Natchez Indians) in the pages of Parkman, Charlevoix, DuPratz and Duponceau, discovering nothing to awaken the slightest suspicion that he dealt with other than what he saw.⁵³

Parrish insists also that even though the "features of the country are greatly altered by settlements of nearly 200 years, one may easily discern evidence of this man's honesty."⁵⁴ The reader's "slightest suspicion" is awakened, however, if one considers how the average person fails to remember significant details even 48 days after even the most exciting events; remembering in such detail 48 years later is highly unlikely.

Even so, Parrish attempts to reinforce Benteen's credibility in the foreword.

According to the earlier records of Louisiana Province, Geoffrey Benteen was, during his later year, a resident of La Petit Rocher, a man of note and character among his fellows ... Apparently in all simplicity and faithfulness he recorded merely what he saw and heard. I no longer question that Geoffrey Benteen witnessed the tragic ending of this strange people. (The Natchez)⁵⁵

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In spite of this, the questions remain: what prompted Benteen to record his adventures of a half a century earlier? Why did he wait so long before writing his manuscript? La Petit Rocher no longer exists on modern maps which leads one to wonder if such a locale even ever existed on the maps of the late eighteenth century Louisiana territory; and, even if so, is Benteen a real person? If so, did he reside there? A cursory check of the history of the period reveals that Parrish's basic facts are correct; for example, the material on the Natchez. However, The Oxford Companion to American History states that "remnants of the family (Natchez-Muskogean) were for the most part forcibly resettled in Oklahoma before 1850."⁵⁶ This does not agree with Parrish's account taken from Benteen's manuscript and other sources such as Parkman.

Even though this novel is written in the same manner as all of Parrish's novels, he claims that the tale is at least partially true based on the manuscript that Parrish claims he inherited may have been authentic.

In any case, Parrish has done what all historical novelists have done according to Ernest Leisy:

The historical novelist retrojects himself into the period of his choice, and is concerned more with re-creating something akin to the actual experience than with appraising it in the light of what happened later. He is there with the actors, living through the experience.⁵⁷

Parrish has used the theme of a married heroine before in a number of his tales, such as Beth Norvell, Gordon Craig, Beyond the Frontier, The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel and Gift of the Desert; this tends to lessen the credibility of Prisoners of Chance being a factual account which Parrish "updated" only slightly.

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Charles De Noyan, the heroine's husband, is along on the flight from the Spanish pursuers for a number of reasons. First, the rescue of DeNoyan by Benteen, the hero, is the initial event of this tale; Eloise, the heroine, has requested this dangerous and almost impossible rescue. Secondly, his rescue brings about the reunion of Eloise and Benteen; the two had been sweethearts some years before.

A third reason is that without the need for the rescue the tale would lack substance for the hero, and he and the heroine would not likely have been reunited under other circumstances.

A fourth reason is that the contrast between DeNoyan and Benteen is essential to the tale. Early on DeNoyan's shallow character is apparent in contrast to Benteen's strong one. Even though DeNoyan does not flee in the midst of danger he is not the forceful, courageous person Benteen is. Later, when the little party meets up with the queen of the Natchez, Naladi, DeNoyan falls easily under her spell and is unable to see how evil she is. Benteen notes what strange "power of passion she exercised over DeNoyan causing him to forget all honor in her presence."⁵⁸ Only when DeNoyan realizes that Naladi intends to sacrifice Eloise in the savage ritual of the Natchez does he show real courage, and that courage results in his death. This final display of courage serves as the final purpose for DeNoyan as he must appear a courageous man to establish him as a worthy opponent for the hero. Prior to this scene, DeNoyan has appeared as volatile, rather flip, but willing to fight when necessary, however he is not the stalwart sort Benteen is.

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The character Puritan was a necessary figure in Prisoners of Chance as all of Parrish's work gives "evidence of the Creator in all events"⁵⁹ further indication of how strongly Parrish was influenced by the Romantic theory of history of the 19th century.

Puritan, whose real name is Reverend Ezekiel Cairnes, represents the strong Protestant (Huguenot) element in America circa 1768. Puritan is as much a religious zealot as is his Catholic counterpart, Father Andre. These two make great religious sparring partners during the latter part of the story and indeed they might have come to more than merely verbal blows had they not both been involved with the Natchez Indians and Naladi.

Puritan brings to the tale the intensity of religious emotion associated with the puritan sects of New England. In fact, Puritan tells how he came from the Connecticut colony and the reader wonders if he might not have been asked to leave or perhaps had even been ejected. He is reminiscent of Roger Williams as he wanders about the area of the French settlement on the Kaskaskia. From his conversations with Benteen, DeNoyan, Eloise and later Father Andre and Naladi it becomes apparent that Puritan often offers unsolicited advice and often talks when he should listen. His main target becomes poor crippled Father Andre, for the priest represents everything Satanic to Puritan. He lashes out at the priest:

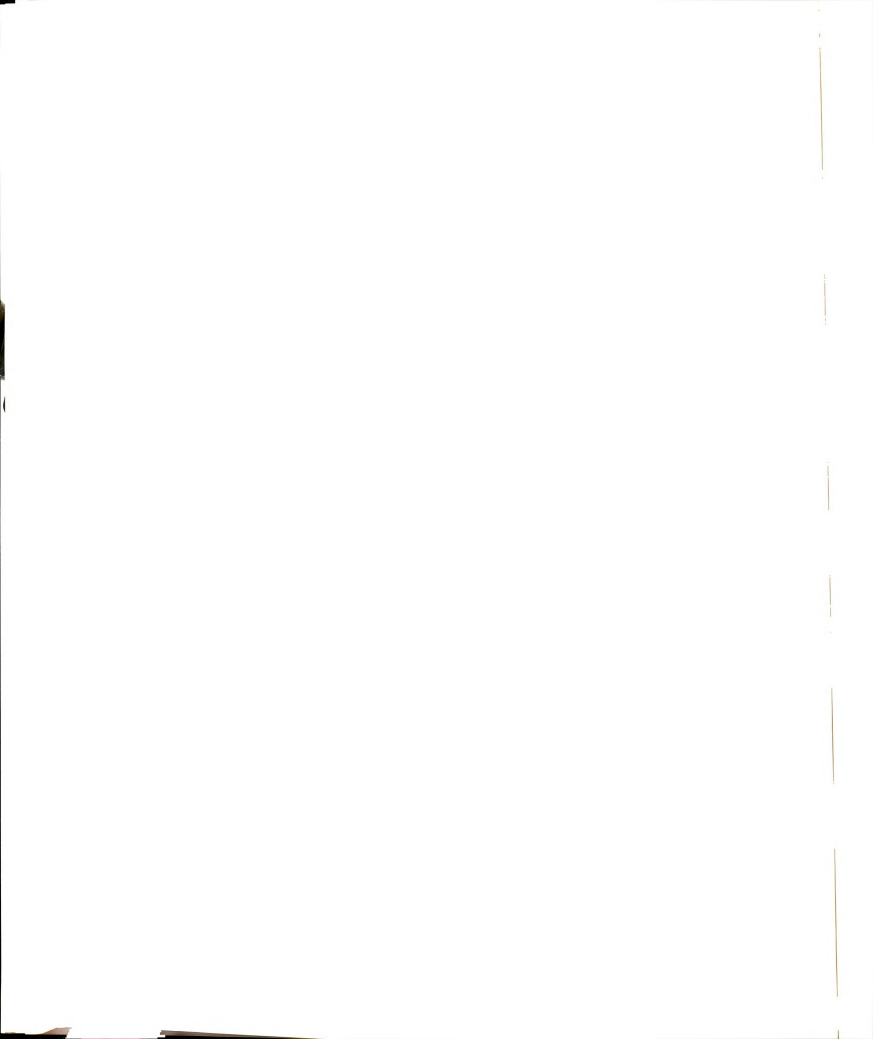
His teaching is false, an outrage on the true religion of the saints, and I am of a strain which can never companion with any of that black-robed breed ... I am ... too long indoctrined in the faith, ever to acknowledge brotherhood with hirelings of the Romish church ... I hold no fellowship with such; he is but an emissary of a false religion, a slave to the Evil One.⁶⁰

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It is easy to understand why Parrish's stories were popular for two decades. He wrote exciting tales which appealed to a large audience from all levels of society. His stories did what historical fiction is supposed to do: "offer entertainment, instruction in patriotism, bring satisfaction to many tastes, give an intensified sense of the happiness and misery which human life encompasses and finally it broadens the reader by letting him see others more fully in the round than they can ever be known in real life."⁶¹

Endnotes

- ¹Russel B. Nye, Society and Culture, p. 103.
- ²Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, pp. 40-41.
Hawthorne claimed that The Scarlet Letter was based on complete fact as he tells his readers:
In the mysterious package was a certain affair of fine red cloth much worn and faded ... (which) assumed the shape of a letter... capital letter "A". (Accompanying the scarlet letter was) a small dingy paper ... recorded by the old Surveyor's pen, a reasonably complete explanation of the whole affair (about Hester Prynne).
Discovery of this information causes one to wonder if perhaps Parrish did the same in Prisoners of Chance as he, like Hawthorne, apparently decided not to reveal that his tale Prisoners of Chance was not fact as he realized that this "discovery" of a document added an extra element of intrigue and credibility to his tale.
- ³Randall Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, pp. 254-255.
- ⁴Ibid., p. 204.
- ⁵Ibid., p. 254.
- ⁶Ibid.
- ⁷Ibid., p. 255.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 256.
- ⁹Edgar A. Poe, "Fall of the House of Usher," p. 95.
- ¹⁰Parrish, p. 254.
- ¹¹Poe, p. 95.
- ¹²Parrish, p. 211.
- ¹³Ibid, p. 19.
- ¹⁴Ibid., p. 22.
- ¹⁵Ibid., p. 28.
- ¹⁶Ibid.



- ¹⁷Ibid., pp. 210, 268, 128.
- ¹⁸Ibid., p. 6.
- ¹⁹Ibid., pp. 212, 213, 91.
- ²⁰Ibid., p. 228.
- ²¹Ibid., p. 134.
- ²²Ibid., p. 159.
- ²³Ibid., p. 30.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 32.
- ²⁵Ibid., pp. 209, 210, 211.
- ²⁶Ibid., pp. 297-298.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 28.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 27.
- ²⁹Ibid.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 338.
- ³¹Ibid., p. 296.
- ³²Thomas H. Johnson (ed.), in consultation with Harvey Wish, Oxford Companion to American History, p. 556.
- ³³Parrish, pp. 252-260.
- ³⁴Ibid., p. 261.
- ³⁵Ibid., p. 219.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 261.
- ³⁷Ibid., p. 254.
- ³⁸Ernest E. Leisy, The American Historical Novel, p. 3.
- ³⁹Parrish, p. 24.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 19.
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 121.
- ⁴²Ibid., p. 17.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 9.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 19.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 20.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 42.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 49.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 26-27.

⁵²Ibid., p. 20.

⁵³Ibid., p. 9.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 10.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 9.

⁵⁶Johnson, p. 557.

⁵⁷Leisy, p. 7.

⁵⁸Parrish, p. 39.

⁵⁹Refers to the first page of this chapter.

⁶⁰Parrish, pp. 375-377.

⁶¹Leisy, p. 3.

CHAPTER IV

The Hero

Parrish's novels run the gamut from historical fiction to westerns to modern spy thrillers. His heroes, however, are essentially of one model, modified but slightly in each novel. It is evident that he was apparently enchanted with the image of the knight of old as portrayed by earlier authors such as Scott, Dumas and Cooper, since he imbues his hero figure with the same characteristics.

Each of Parrish's heroes must honor and live by the chivalric code. The hero is steadfast, loyal, patriotic and by today's standards overly chauvinistic. He is kind toward those who deserve kindness, courteous even to those who do not deserve courtesy, and honorable even when his life is in danger. In addition, he is diligent, courageous, energetic, vital and strong, especially when the circumstances in which he finds himself would frighten a man who does not live by the chivalric code.

Raoul De Coubert, hero of A Sword of the Old Frontier, expresses his devotion to the chivalric code many times:

... as the authorized representative of France, I purpose (sic) remaining with the hostiles, exerting my utmost endeavors for humanity and the saving of human life.¹

Parrish's heroes can be termed "formula heroes" as defined by John Cawelti in his book Adventure, Mystery and Romance. Cawelti

analyzes the formula story and the archetypal pattern of adventure, mystery and romance from which this formula emerged.² Although Cawelti does not cite Parrish in his examples of formulaic literature, Parrish nevertheless wrote to formula, as did Edgar Rice Burroughs, Zane Grey, Owen Wister and many others. Neither does there appear to be any significant variance in the hero's character within the three categories of Parrish's novel: historical fiction, western and spy.

All of Parrish's heroes are Caucasian, usually native born Americans. There are some exceptions; Geoffrey Carlyle (Wolves of the Sea) is an Englishman who comes to America on a prison ship. Shea is an Irishman who remains in Europe; Shea of the Irish Brigade is the only novel that Parrish wrote that is set in Europe. Raoul de Coubert (A Sword of the Old Frontier) is a French import who is stationed in America. Other French emigres are Philip Dessaud who comes to demonstrate his monoplane here in America and D'Artigny, who like Coubert, is stationed here in America to help protect French military installations.

Parrish's heroes are almost always young men in their late twenties and very early thirties. The only exceptions appear to be John Wayland (When Wilderness Was King) and Steven Knox (The Devil's Own) who were not quite twenty, Raoul de Coubert (A Sword of the Old Frontier) who was in his early forties, and Bob Hampton (Bob Hampton of Placer) who was termed "middle-aged". Don MacGrath (Don MacGrath) was the only really young hero; he was around 16 or 17 having been kidnapped as a little boy, thus he was not certain exactly how old he was.

Most of the heroes are between 20-30 years old, often associated with the military, and often well-educated. All claim a decent, upright family background. All share a dogged determination to duty and country and great respect for the weaker sex. Each is fiercely chauvinistic. Each has the innate ability to sense good and evil in those with whom he comes in contact; this characteristic surfaces no matter how young the hero may be. Steven Knox (The Devil's Own) is barely 20 but recognizes the egotism in Judge Beaucaire, but also notes that "his deep, resonant voice left a pleasant impression"³. When he encounters Kirby, Knox notes quickly the guile in the gambler as he thinks:

His dark eyes were like a mask. While they seemed to smile in friendly greeting, they yet remained expressionless...the face into which I looked...was a reckless face, yet appeared carved from marble.⁴

Later, Knox has his suspicions confirmed as Kirby reveals how evil he is by cheating the Judge out of his estate in a rigged card game. Knox realizes how right he was earlier -- Kirby is the vicious and contemptuous man he had recognized him to be.

One other of Parrish's young heroes who is innately perceptive in judging good and evil in persons is John Wayland (When Wilderness Was King). John is 20, like Knox, and though he has spent much of his life in the wilderness, he is able to assess the good and evil in others almost instantly. When Villiers de Croix rattles on about his glorious adventures as a French soldier John realizes, "that he was merely showing off his genteel graces the better to exhibit his contempt for my provincial narrowness."⁵

Don McGrath, the youngest of all the heroes, has the same singular ability to determine good and evil. A Huck Finn

personality, he assesses others with great accuracy even though he lacks education and upbringing. For example, Don "recognized restrained sympathy in the mate's gruffness".⁶ Later, Don meets Mark Dean and Don found that "the reckless good nature of the man appealed to him."⁷ Don knows instinctively that Mark is basically good. He knows that Dean is good, just as he knew his adopted father, Tom McGrath, and the Jewish jeweler are evil.

Joseph Hayward (Maid of the Forest) initially distrusts Rene D'Auvray simply because she is part Indian and Indians are not to be trusted. He admits his prejudice when he says, "I have the prejudice of a borderer and prefer my own people."⁸ Later he tries to soften his earlier statement with another

- it is difficult to break away from old prejudices
- I cannot realize you are actually of Indian blood
- that you belong to the wild tribes.⁹

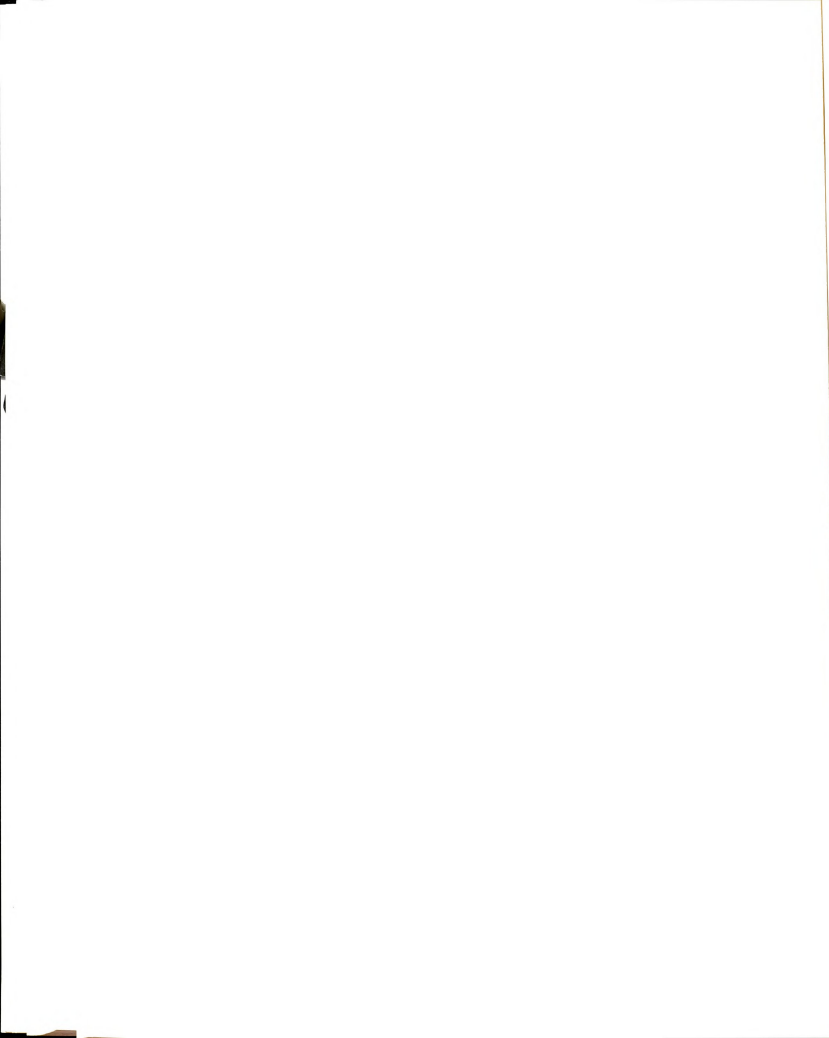
After Hayward learns that Rene is only one-quarter Indian of the peaceful Wyandotte tribe, his attitude toward her begins to change. In fact, he falls in love with her because she really is not Indian, only part after all. By the end of the story he is willing to sacrifice himself in order to save Rene.

Other heroes reveal their distrust of others, based on ethnic backgrounds. In Gift of the Desert, Kelleen describes Manuel Gomez, the Mexican, as "the ape-man" -- the murderer, the outlaw and Juan Sanchez as vicious and sneaky, never to be trusted.¹⁰

Philip Severn (The Mystery of the Silver Dagger) speaks of Ivan Waldron

is sufficiently a Jew to want all he can get out of the job. He wouldn't divide unless he had to.¹¹

As for Waldron's appearance, Severn says --



I could not easily have mistaken the fellow; his appearance was emphatically that of the Russian Jew of a certain type to enable him to conceal his birthright.¹²

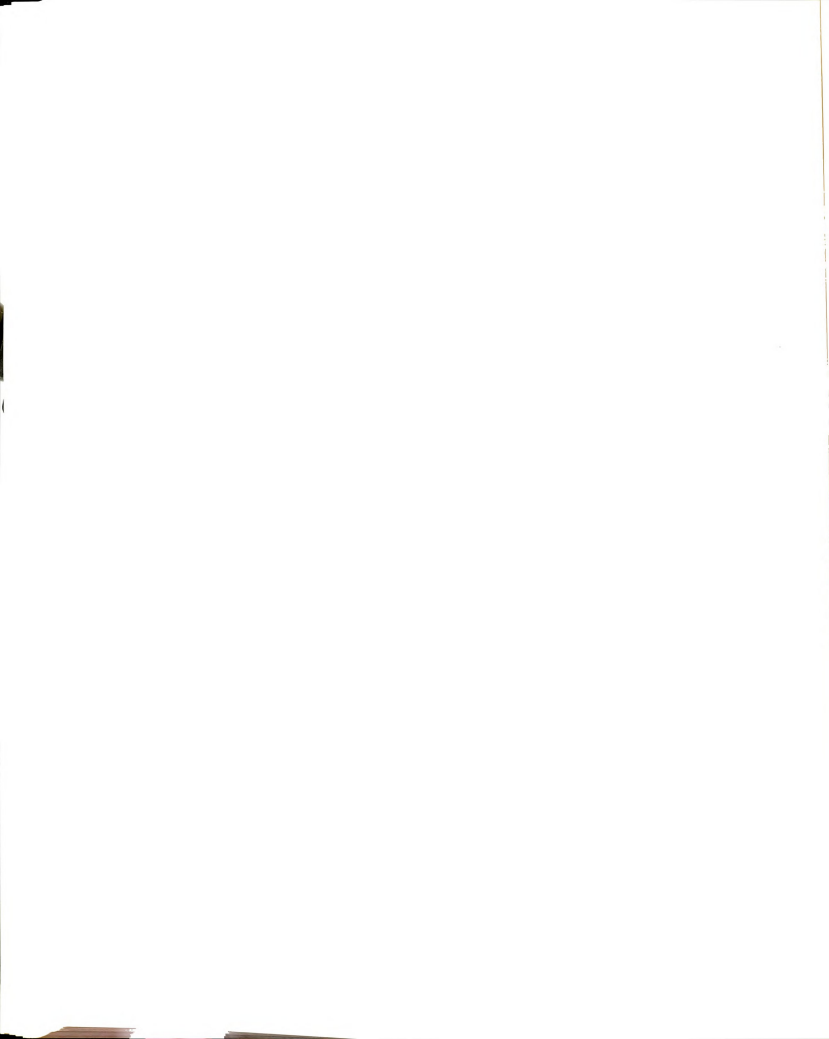
Severn is highly critical of another ethnic group -- the Polish. On one occasion he thinks as he peers in the window of a bar, "The man behind the bar was unmistakably Polish and of no high type."¹³

Interestingly, Parrish's heroes seldom denigrate Blacks, except to comment occasionally on their slowness, stupidity and belief in superstition. However, they are quick to see how loyal a Black can be, especially in the service of a lady.

Apparently Parrish uses his central heroic figures to express prejudice against various racial and ethnic groups, but rather artfully disguises it by presenting prejudice as the hero's ability to assess the good and evil in others. Only occasionally does he change his attitude regarding race or ethnic background; this occurs because the person with whom he becomes involved merits such change.

For instance, Steven Knox assists Rene Beaucaire, the mulatto, in escaping from the villain. Joseph Hayward falls in love with the quarter Indian girl, Rene. Thus, based on the perceptions of the various heroes, all of them assess the good and evil inherent in the novels' characters based on their racial or ethnic background.

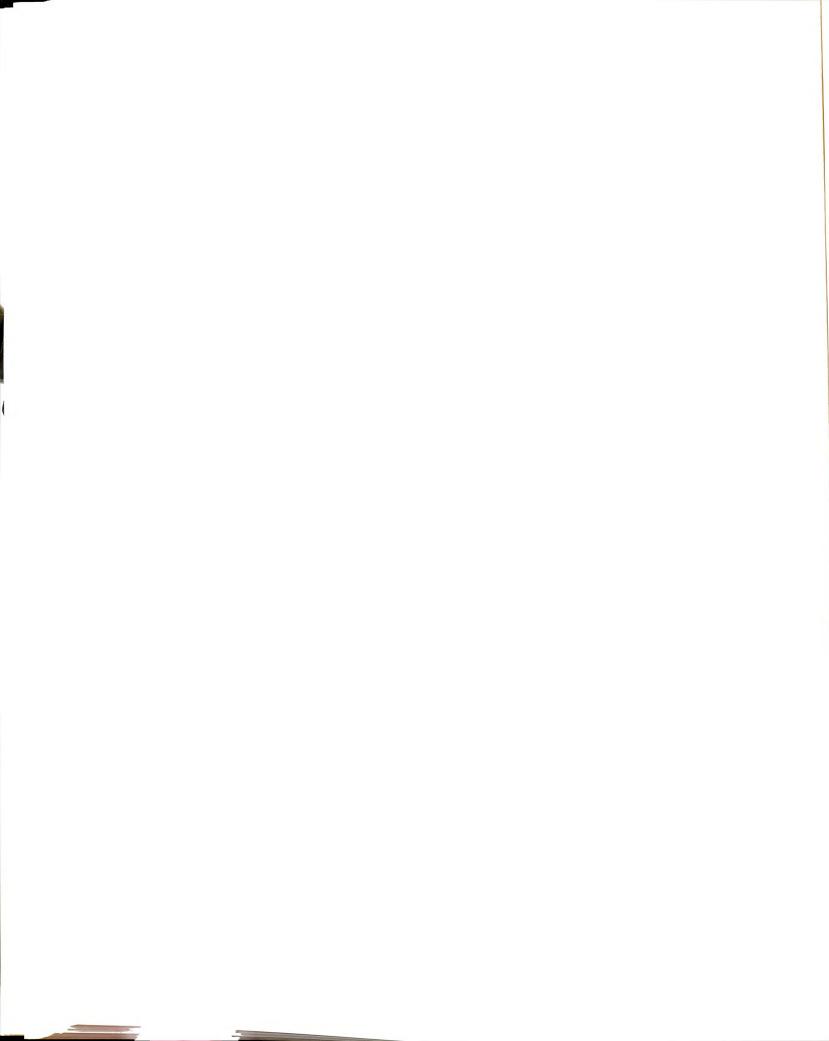
There is little, if any, character development among Parrish's heroes. Since some of them relocate themselves voluntarily for a period of time. This relocation is self-imposed as a sort of "therapy" for the hero. Often this is accompanied by the need for money. Usually this period of mental adjustment occurs prior to the



opening of the tale but in a few instances the hero is still in processes of change when the novel begins.

One such hero, for example, is Gordon Craig (Gordon Craig, Soldier of Fortune) who joined the army after a quarrel with his father. The novel opens shortly after Craig's discharge from the army and he feels he needs time to determine what he wants to do next with his life. He relocates himself in a small town in the Midwest. Although he had completed three years of college prior to his army training, he realizes he is not sufficiently trained to qualify for a job which requires a degree. Also, he is determined not to ask his father for any help nor will he return home unsuccessful. Therefore Craig resorts to manual labor in order to survive while determining what his next step will be. Matt West (The Case and the Girl) also is taking time off after lengthy military service. He too is college educated and an engineer, but he needs time to reevaluate himself and to determine new goals. During his reassessment Matt allows himself to become involved in solving a mystery. Brick Hamlin (Molly McDonald) and Jack Keith (Keith of the Border) go west after serving the Confederacy. They realize that there is nothing left for them to return to in the South after the Civil War and hope that life on the frontier will bring a new start for them. But in spite of relocation, or a period of time out, none of the heroes change their moral code or modify their actions, no matter how dangerous the situation in which they become involved.

Critical examination of the character of the hero within Parrish's novels clearly indicates that Parrish created but one hero



and the hero's character remains static. Even though his age may change, he is still essentially the same man in every tale.

Another most important aspect of the hero's personality is his attitude toward women. Like the knight of old, the knight of the New World must protect the fair damsel, even to the point of sacrificing his own safety. One such hero of Parrish's is Jack Keith of Keith of the Border, described thus:

His code of honor was that of the border, tinged by that of the South before the war.¹⁴

In American literature we are often reminded that the code of honor found in the South before the War Between the States had its roots in western Europe and England. The code was transferred to the New World nearly intact, and underwent but slight modification even up to the postwar Civil War days. Thus, someone like Jack Keith was, indeed, a latter-day "knight of the frontier" now transplanted to the west.

Parrish's heroes are not the "heroes" described by Henry Nash Smith in his volume Virgin Land, the American West as Symbol and Myth. Smith states that some of these heroes were men not much different from the outlaws they opposed. Parrish's hero retains his gentlemanly qualities as Cooper's Leatherstocking always maintained his courtliness wherever he travelled.

Parrish's hero does not fit the mold described by such writers as Bret Harte and Hamlin Garland. Their heroes were often ambiguous, combinations of good and bad, diamonds in the rough. For example, in Harte's "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," the hard, unfeeling miners decide to become, as a group, adoptive fathers of an orphaned infant who happened to be born in their camp. Garland's models also are

much the same as Harte's, a combination of good and bad. For example, Garland's story, The Captain of the Gray-Horse Troop, deals with the frontiersmen's and cattlemen's unfair treatment of the Indians.

Parrish would never have allowed his hero to have to make such a decision involving the aiding of prostitutes and other "low life"; such subjects as prostitution and illegitimate birth are avoided in his tales. Also, children almost never appear in Parrish's books.

The only Parrish hero who even approaches the Bret Harte, Hamlin Garland model is Gordon Craig, but even he does not quite fit the good/bad pattern described by Smith. This may be due to the fact that both Harte and Garland were realists, Parrish a romantic. Craig is a soldier of fortune, fallen on bad times, who becomes involved in a scheme to make money quickly but after he learns the scheme is illegal, he sets out to right it. Basically a good man, he participates in the plot by impersonating the heir to a large fortune, until he discovers it will bilk the rightful heir's widow out of her share of the inheritance. At this point he decides he must outwit the villains, which he does by exposing them to the proper authorities.

In addition, Parrish's tales lack the earthy, real life quality of Harte and Garland. Parrish's heroes are more similar, at least in behavior, to James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking character.

Unlike Cooper's Leatherstocking, however, Parrish almost consistently allows his hero to marry his heroine. Bob Hampton of Placer is the only exception. Hampton was middle-aged at the

beginning of the story, and his encounter with the heroine was resolved satisfactorily when it was revealed that he was her father.

In every tale the hero displays traits of goodness, strength, courage, self-confidence and integrity which inspire instant respect and trust from all who meet him, even from the villains. They, of course, attempt to use the hero to aid their devious schemes. In Gordon Craig, Soldier of Fortune, the hero is persuaded initially to assume another's identity in order to settle an estate. Craig justifies his acceptance with:

I could not perceive any great wrong in the action... the poor devil was utterly unable to comply with the terms of will... If I could serve him; save the property for him, at almost no danger to myself, and make a tidy sum of money doing it, why shouldn't I consent?¹⁵

Later, Craig senses that the scheme is fraudulent and at that point determines to handle the situation differently. He says, "I am going to be Gordon Craig, and not a make-believe Philip Henley,"¹⁶ the man Craig was to impersonate.

Molly McDonald (Molly McDonald) found such traits in Brick Hamlin:

Somehow she was not as frightened as she had been. The calm steady coolness of the man was having its natural effect, was helping to control her own nerves. She felt his strength, his confidence, and was beginning to lean upon him - he seemed to know exactly what he was about.¹⁷

Viola Bernard (alias Viola Henley) sees the same characteristics in Gordon Craig. She tells him he gave her "courage to go on."¹⁸ Later she declares:

I trusted you, I believed in you; you had impressed me as being a real man... I believed you to be a gentleman.¹⁹

Helen Probyns, the heroine of The Air Pilot, expresses similar feelings when Philip Dessaud, the hero, asks her if she will trust herself with him; she says, "Absolutely, (sic) I know a man when I meet one."²⁰

Judging by the numerous references to class Parrish was obviously concerned with social status as an influence on character. Parrish, in fact, at times appears almost obsessed with the idea of class. This awareness of class consciousness is part of the hero's awareness that he is a modern version of the knight of long ago and like his predecessors realizes the importance the social structure of knighthood. Therefore, the hero, as modern knight, must address the important issue of class over and over, recognizing it, or the lack of it, in all those with whom he comes in contact.

Since knights must display gentlemanly qualities, such qualities are apparent in all of Parrish's heroes. Even when the hero lacks the social status of birth and upbringing that automatically classifies him as a gentleman, he nonetheless possesses an innate "gentlemanliness." Raoul de Coubert agonizes over his low social status when he realizes he is in love with Alene Maitland. He is but a "coureur de bois," a vagrant of the forest, in spite of his rank as captain.

Parrish frequently emphasizes his hero's education. Many are well-educated, often with a college background. Gordon Craig speaks of his two years at the university. Jack Keith tells of his two years at William and Mary before the War Between the States. Tom Winston (Beth Norvell) has gone to college with Beth's brother, Bob.

But with or without formal schooling, all of Parrish's heroes are well-educated. Some of them speak several languages, all are worldly-wise from experience and travel. Raoul de Coubert, a Frenchman, speaks English fluently, and can communicate in several Indian languages. He has had some formal education, but his main education has come through serving in the "uncivilized Illinois country" as a representative of France.

However, in some of the novels Parrish wrote early in his career, such as When Wilderness was King and A Sword of the Old Frontier, formal education was not stressed as much as it would be later. At that point in his career, Parrish apparently had determined that education through experience with nature and the military was more appropriate for his heroes. John Wayland, hero of When Wilderness was King, expresses it thus:

In my hunting trips, I learned many a trick of the forest,²¹

referring to hunting, trapping, scouting and following trails so necessary to survival. Wayland did, however, have access to structured schooling through his mother, who had been a school teacher, and through his father, who loved Shakespeare and read the plays aloud to him.

Physical appearance is an important aspect of all of Parrish's characters. He often describes his heroes in great detail and thus involves the readers of his highly romantic tales to an even greater degree. By physical description he establishes the strength of Parrish's heroes. In Parrish's time, the reader would not accept a hero who was not physically vigorous and attractive; Parrish's readers would never have accepted a homely hero. In fact, several



of the heroes in Parrish's mystery stories anticipate a much more virtuous James Bond. One, Tom Shelby (Comrades of Peril), is about 25 or 26. He is tall, with powerful shoulders, tanned, smooth-shaven, and slim waisted. His straight posture gives evidence of his past military training and his eyes, like those of numerous other Parrish characters, are grey and intense.

The oldest hero, Bob Hampton, is middle-aged but remains strong and stalwart, with military bearing. His face is clear-cut and expressive, his jaw square, his eyes are grey and intense. His dark hair is beginning to grey at the temples, the only indication that Hampton is middle-aged -- reminiscent of Cooper's Natty Bumppo.

A younger hero is John Wayland, whose physical strength results from his frontier upbringing. Wayland is big, tall and strong. As an old man, Tom Burns comments:

Ye're quire a lad, ain't ye? Weigh all o'hundred an' seventy, I'll bet, an' strong as an ox.²²

Burns at the same time mentions a fight Wayland had with the neighborhood bully and Wayland acknowledges that he "hurt him more seriously than I meant."²³ Wayland's strength proves to be very important as he protects young Antoinette Matherson while he escorts her through the hostile Indian territory near Maumee, Ohio, in the early 1800's.

Gordon Craig (Gordon Craig) describes himself thus:

I was young, full-blooded, strong, willing enough to take desperate chances for sufficient reward...²⁴

Later as Craig "glances into the cracked mirror," he observes:

However I might have otherwise suffered from the years of hardships, I had not deteriorated physically. My face was bronzed by the sun, my muscles like iron, my eyes clear, every movement of my body evidencing



strength, my features lean and clean cut under a head of closely trimmed hair.²⁵

Craig's assessment, "satisfied with the inspection, confident of myself,"²⁶ is conveyed to the reader and once again the strength and general physical appearance of the hero becomes established in the mind of the reader as an important part of the total character of the hero.

Cawelti discusses the strange relationship (bond) of the hero and the lawless, e.g. sheriffs and outlaws, Leatherstocking and most Indians.²⁷ In When Wilderness was King the hero, John Wayland, has a bond with the "coureurs de bois" who were considered "off-scourings of our people, Canadian half-breeds"²⁸ by the French Captain of the Guard, de Croix.

...this new style western hero was typically an older man and very much a loner, at least at the beginning of his adventures. Even when he was not explicitly an outlaw, he was an outcast from society, either because of his violent past or his inability to settle down.²⁹

This description fits a number of Parrish's heroes, especially Bob Hampton. Hampton has dropped his last name, Nolan, because he was drummed out of the military, but Hampton's "seamy past turns out to be a myth" as Cawelti puts it.³⁰ The reader learns from Hampton that:

As a result I was held guilty of murder in the second degree, dismissed from the army in disgrace, and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.³¹

Of course, Hampton had been falsely accused; he was on the scene of the murder quite by accident, but unfortunately had quarreled with the murdered man, a fellow officer, the night



previous to the slaying. Certainly this situation fits Cawelti's criterion of a hero with a past.

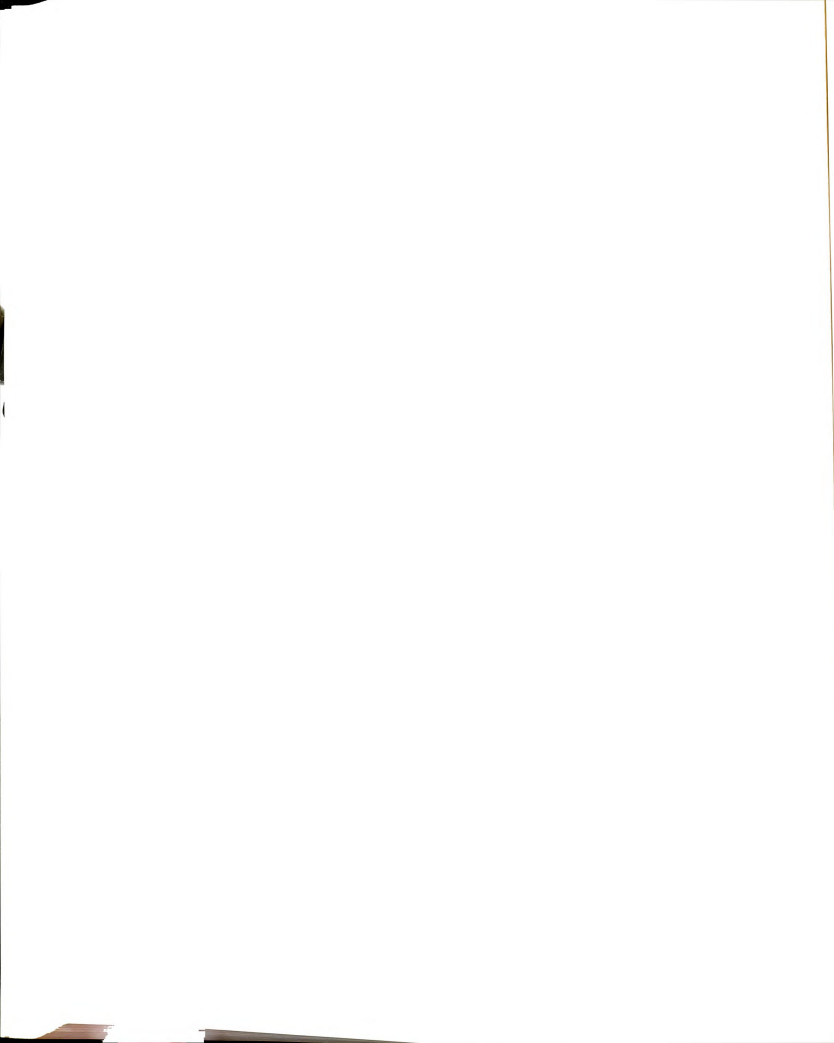
Cawelti's determination that:

Unlike the detective story, the western/formula is not defined by a fixed pattern of action - many different plots can be used for westerns so long as they pose some basic challenge to the hero and work toward his ultimate confrontation with an antagonist.³²

again applies to Parrish's stories. Even Parrish's "detective" and "spy" type stories can be included. It is easy to recognize the difference in plot between any two of Parrish's westerns. Bob Hampton of Placer picks up after Hampton's release from prison, and the confrontation with an antagonist comes near the end of the story when Hampton finally hunts down the real murderer.

Jack Keith, hero of Keith of the Border, has no personal grudge against the scoundrel, Black Bart, but rather needs to rid society of him. Keith, too, had been in the military, a Captain in the Confederacy who tried to return to civilian life after the Civil War, but could not bear the monotony and frustration of trying to wring some sort of existence out of the family plantation. Thus Keith opted for a life of a border patrolman. The main incident of the story involves Keith's search for Black Bart, who has wronged a friend of Keith's. The confrontation comes near the end of the story as Keith meets up with Black Bart Hawley, alias Bartlett Gale. An ironic twist in this tale is that Black Bart turns out to be the heroine's father!

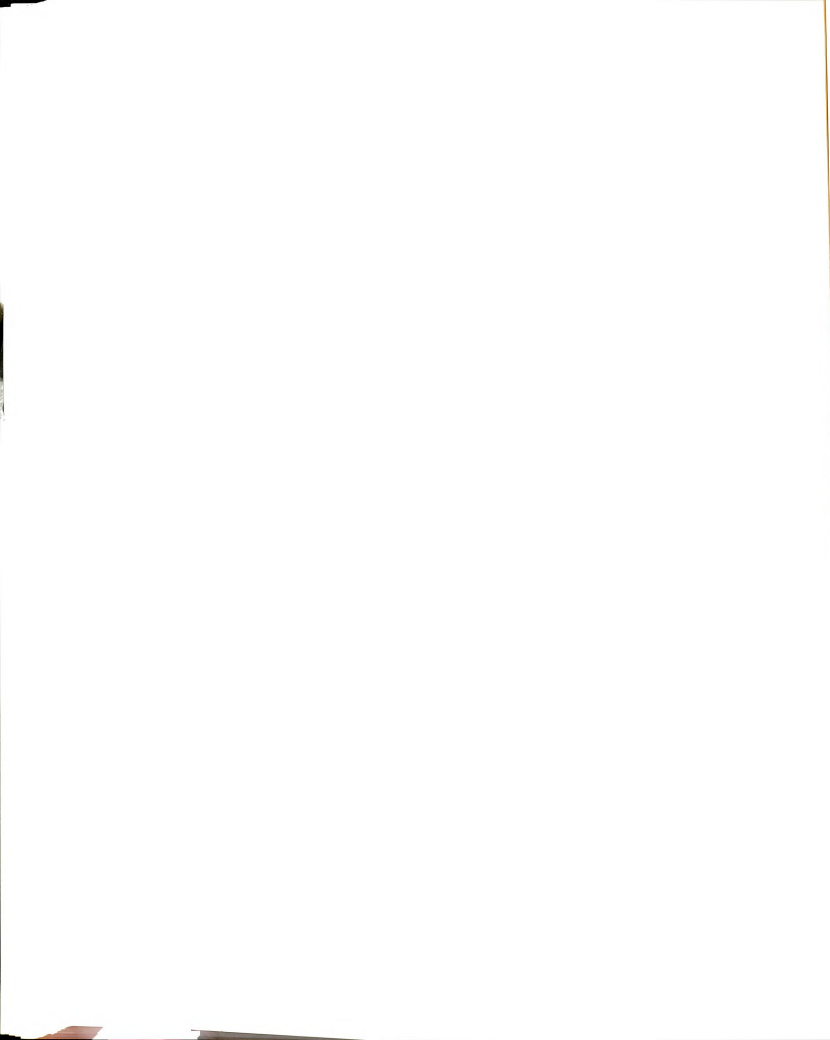
The skills and attitudes of the Parrish hero develop as he gains experience, usually through the military, which he uses to advantage while dealing with civilians. Brick Hamlin (Molly



McDonald), for instance, leads the daughter of his commanding officer through dangerous Indian territory. In Cawelti's Adventure, Mystery and Romance, he includes in his discussion of the hero the term "dude." Since "dude" means a dandy, or a person from the city, perhaps it would be appropriate to include other heroes, such as Tom Winston (Beth Norvell), an Easterner, who finds himself attracted to Beth and feels obligated to follow and protect her as she tours with a theater group. Tom Winston learns quickly the skills so necessary in dealing with villains. Another "dude" is Gordon Craig (Gordon Craig, Soldier of Fortune) who gets involved in a shady deal with some con men who are after the inheritance of Philip Henley. Matt West (The Case and the Girl) is similarly involved when he, like Craig, answers a want ad which reads: "Wanted: young man of education and daring for service involving some personal peril."³³ Of course, no hero of Parrish's could possibly resist such temptation.

There can be no doubt, therefore, that Parrish's heroes fit into the categories described by scholars like John Cawelti. The heroes created by Parrish all ultimately wear "white hats" (symbol of the hero) and fulfill the function so essential to the tale of adventure, mystery and romance, where "the hero triumphs over danger and obstacles"³⁴ and in the end usually wins the heroine.

The conclusions regarding the status of the hero are the result of careful examination and analysis. The charts prepared indicate that Parrish did not limit his writing to any one of the three categories for more than two years in a row. For example, in 1904-05 he wrote one historical fiction each year (When Wilderness was King - 1904) and (A Sword of the Old Frontier - 1905). He wrote

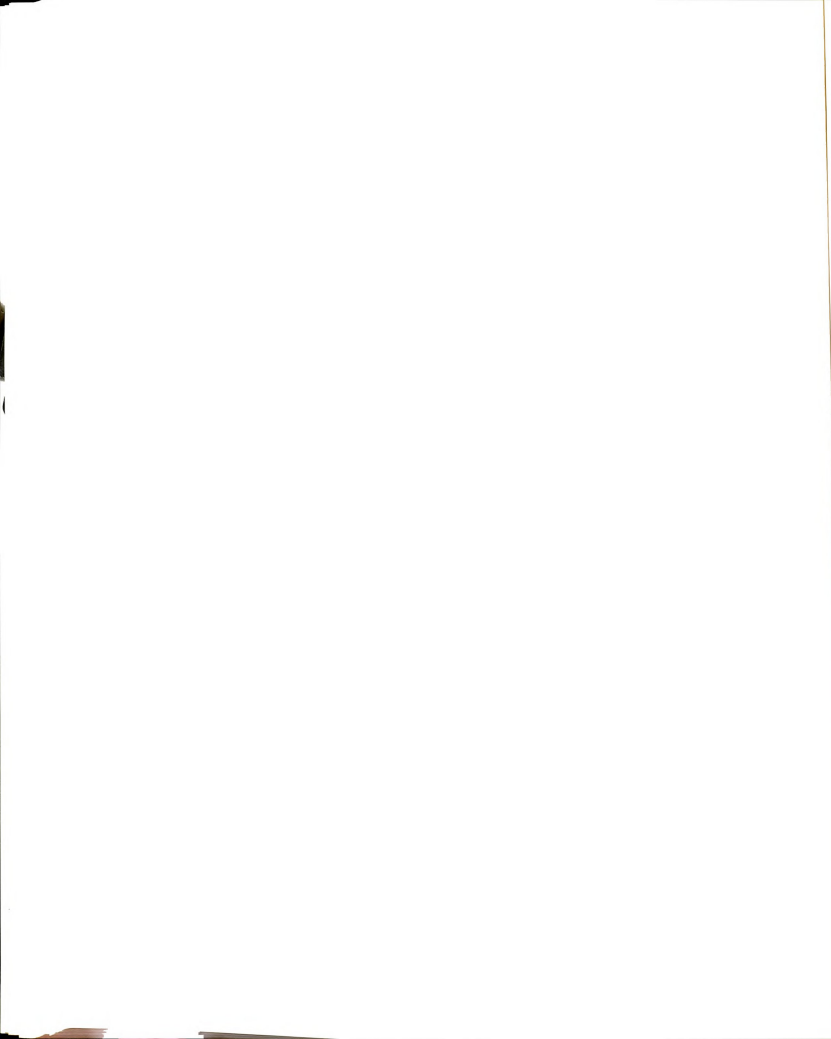


two westerns the two years following (Bob Hampton of Placer - 1906) and (Beth Norvell - 1907). Further examination of his tales in general reveals that the age range of the hero is from approximately 17 to approximately 45 with no apparent pattern based solely on time the story was written or published.

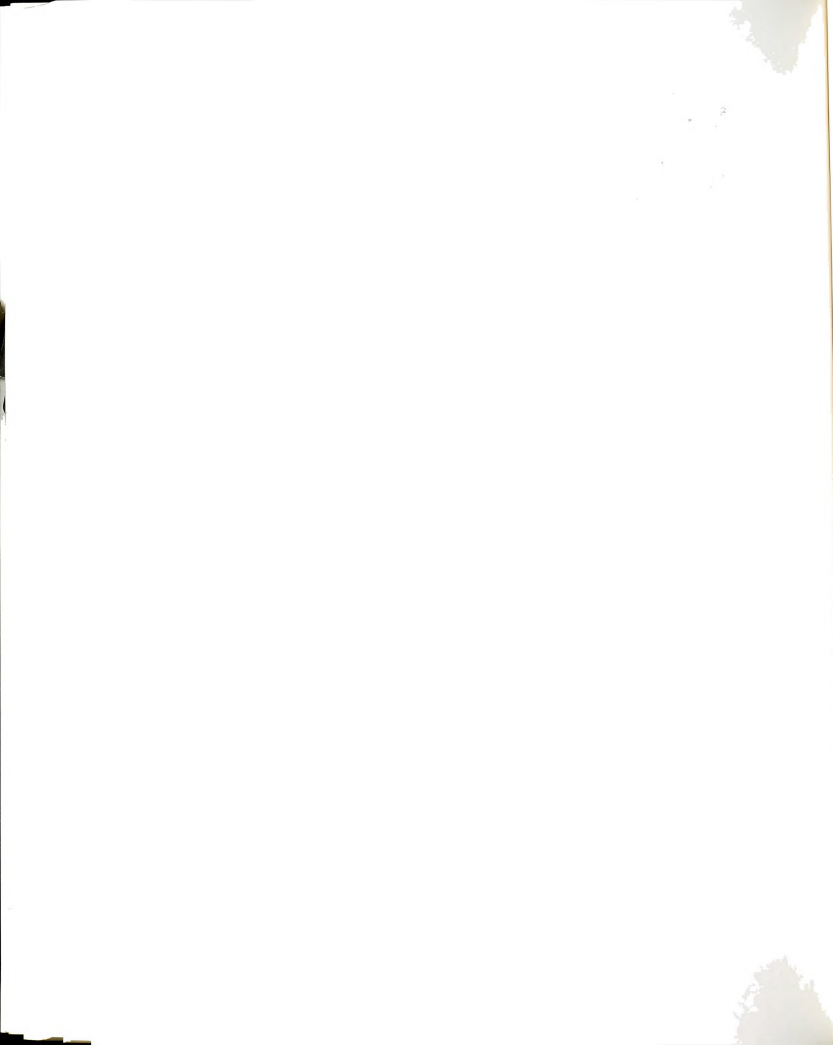
It is evident, therefore, that these heroes all share common characteristics which reveal a static hero, a stereotype in the formula writer's mold. Particular attention should be paid to his publications in 1911. During that year he published three books, the most in any one year. All three were historical fiction, two were about the Civil War, one about the American Revolution. All three featured a native born hero in his early twenties with some college education and military background and experience. Perhaps that year in particular points up Parrish's static hero. By this time Parrish had been writing for seven years and had 11 successful publications; apparently he had determined that his stereotyped hero was a winner so why ruin a winning streak by changing him?

Endnotes

- ¹Randall Parrish, A Sword of the Old Frontier, p. 66.
- ²John Cawelti, Adventure, Mystery and Romance, p. 7.
- ³Randall Parrish, The Devil's Own, p. 17.
- ⁴Ibid., p. 18.
- ⁵Randall Parrish, When Wilderness was King, p. 34.
- ⁶Randall Parrish, Don McGrath, p. 19.
- ⁷Ibid., p. 31.
- ⁸Randall Parrish, Maid of the Forest, p. 66.
- ⁹Ibid., p. 68.
- ¹⁰Randall Parrish, Gift of the Desert, p. 247.
- ¹¹Randall Parrish, The Mystery of the Silver Dagger, p. 214.
- ¹²Ibid., p. 215.
- ¹³Ibid., p. 27.
- ¹⁴Randall Parrish, Keith of the Border, p. 346.
- ¹⁵Randall Parrish, Gordon Craig, Soldier of Fortune, p. 28.
- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 162.
- ¹⁷Randall Parrish, Molly McDonald, p. 69.
- ¹⁸Parrish, Gordon Craig, Soldier of Fortune, p. 72.
- ¹⁹Ibid., p. 166.
- ²⁰Randall Parrish, The Air Pilot, p. 48.
- ²¹Parrish, When Wilderness was King, p. 10.
- ²²Ibid., p. 4.
- ²³Ibid., p. 5.



- ²⁴Parrish, Gordon Craig, Soldier of Fortune, p.13.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 14.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 15.
- ²⁷Cawelti, Adventure, Mystery and Romance, p. 193.
- ²⁸Parrish, When Wilderness was King, p. 35.
- ²⁹Cawelti, Adventure, Mystery and Romance, p. 234.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 236.
- ³¹Parrish, Bob Hampton of Placer, p. 319.
- ³²Cawelti, Adventure, Mystery and Romance, p. 192.
- ³³Parrish, The Case and the Girl, p. 11.
- ³⁴Cawelti, Adventure, Mystery and Romance, p. 41.



CHAPTER V

The Code: The Law

The Law and the Hero

The "law," or code of behavior presented in Parrish's novels is a combination of the law of the spiritual world and that of the temporal world --a conjunction of civil and moral law. Civil law is associated with government affairs and relates to the private rights of individuals. Moral law, however, pertains to morality, conforming to that which is right, virtuous. Both civil law and moral law focus on the distinction between right and wrong, good and evil; both are influenced heavily by religious philosophy coming out of Judaic-Christian tradition.

Also not to be overlooked is the law of love as expressed by Parrish, which apparently is more important to him, than the other facets of the code by which his heroes and heroines live. Parrish defines this most explicitly in his novel, Love Under Fire, as the hero states that "the law of love, the love of a man for one woman is as old as man (himself)".¹

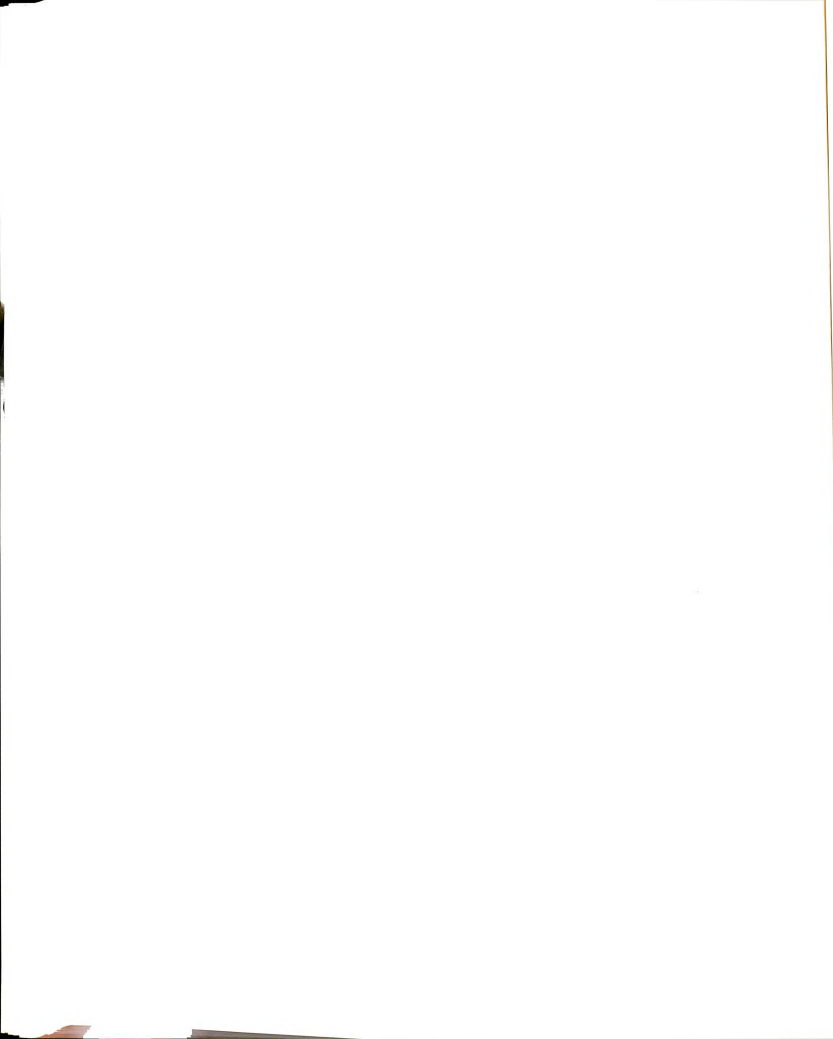
In many respects the civil law is essentially that which existed during the Middle Ages in Europe. The moral "law", although the code of a much earlier time, is the one by which Parrish's

heroes abide and which his villains defy or ignore. This leads to conflicts between the hero and the villains.

The law is, at times, apparently on the side of evil and the villain, but one can be assured that this will be changed by the conclusion of the story. Good must and does triumph finally. The laws of this temporal world reflect the higher spiritual laws as well.

Much of the law by which the hero and other forces for good operate is based largely in moral doctrine, especially that of the Roman Catholic church. For example, in Prisoners of Chance the hero, although a non-church-goer, defers quickly and most willingly to the priest, Father Andre Lafossir. Of course, some of the respect is due to the fact that the hero, Geoffrey Benteen, is enamored of Eloise de Noyan and Father Andre is her private confessor and protector. However, Geoffrey also respects Father Andre because of the spiritual law that he represents. He admires, especially, Father Andre's never faltering dedication to his Church. Even when Geoffrey learns of Father Andre's earlier escapade before he became a priest (he had run away with a witch named Naladi) Geoffrey does not judge Father Andre, but rather determines to leave that to God.

Why Parrish made use of many examples where the spiritual law is involved with the Roman Catholic moral code can be attributed possibly to the fact that many of his settings are in the French and Indian settlements of early America circa the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries where Roman Catholicism was prevalent. In addition to Prisoners of Chance other novels, A Sword of the Old

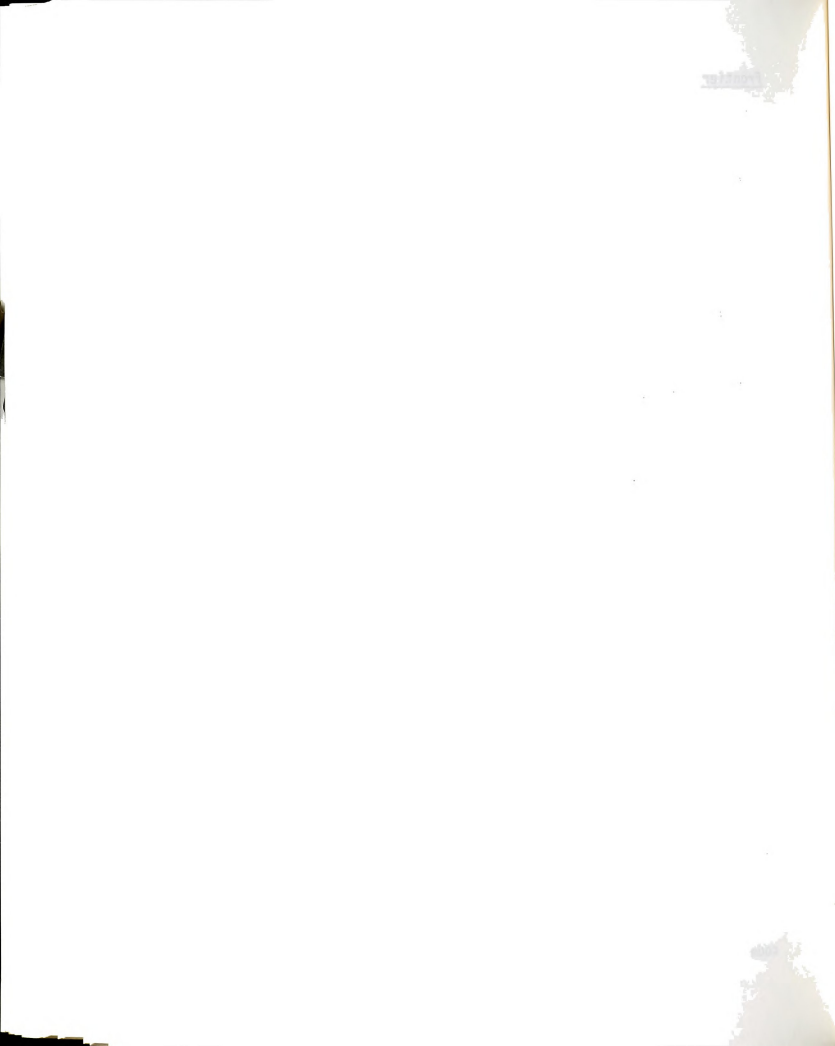


Frontier, Maid of the Forest, Beyond the Frontier and When Wilderness Was King all feature such settings.

Parrish does not indicate in many of his novels whether the spiritual law is based on Roman Catholicism, but the dedication to and admiration for spiritual law of his characters are evident. For example, in Beth Norvell, The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel and Gordon Craig, all heroines are married, but not to the heroes, and all steadfastly refuse to divorce their spouses. They are dedicated to Catholic law even though they do not love their husbands, and in each case the hero respects the heroine's pledge to keep her vows.

Often Parrish shows the power of spiritual law. One such example in Prisoners of Chance is Father Andre's attempt to make Naladi repent of her numerous sins before her death, which he declares she must do in order to save her soul. Respect for spiritual law is evident when Eloise de Noyan, the heroine in Prisoners of Chance, declares that, "It was the desire of my father, and the will of the Church," that she marry deNoyan, a man she did not love.²

The real power of spiritual law however, lies in the effect it had on the moral code of many societies. The spiritual law influenced the moral code, an important part of the chivalric code, by which Parrish's heroes lived. However, the chivalric code became more worldly as time passed, apparently because modification was necessary. The modified moral code that Parrish's heroes lived by is an important element in every Parrish novel, mentioned many times. In Keith of the Border, for instance, Parrish states it thus: "His code of honor was that of the border, tinged by that of the South



before the war." The spiritual aspect is evident later when Keith determines to meet the villain, Hawley, -- "he must meet this (situation with Hawley) as became a man." Keith simply could not allow temporal law to take its course and "watch him (Hawley) ride unsuspectingly into the power of these armed men - to be made captive." For Keith that was unthinkable: "That would be a coward's act, leaving a stain never to be eradicated."³

Parrish's heroes, while dealing with evil persons who chose to disobey or at least ignore the moral code based on spiritual law, yet remain obedient to the moral code; this unquestioning obedience to morality is one of the characteristics which marks the heroes as innately good.

Law, both spiritual and temporal, is a focal point in Parrish's novels. In Gordon Craig, the hero works within the law even when he allows himself to become part of a scheme to settle an inheritance by posing as the real heir. He agrees only because the lawyers who are handling the case convince him that such is within the law. The lawyers convince Craig before he will sign anything that their plan is legal and its purpose "not criminal." Later Craig is disenchanted with the arrangements and determines to quell "the suspicion in his mind that all was not straight" by following through as Gordon Craig, not Philip Henley, until the situation was resolved.⁴

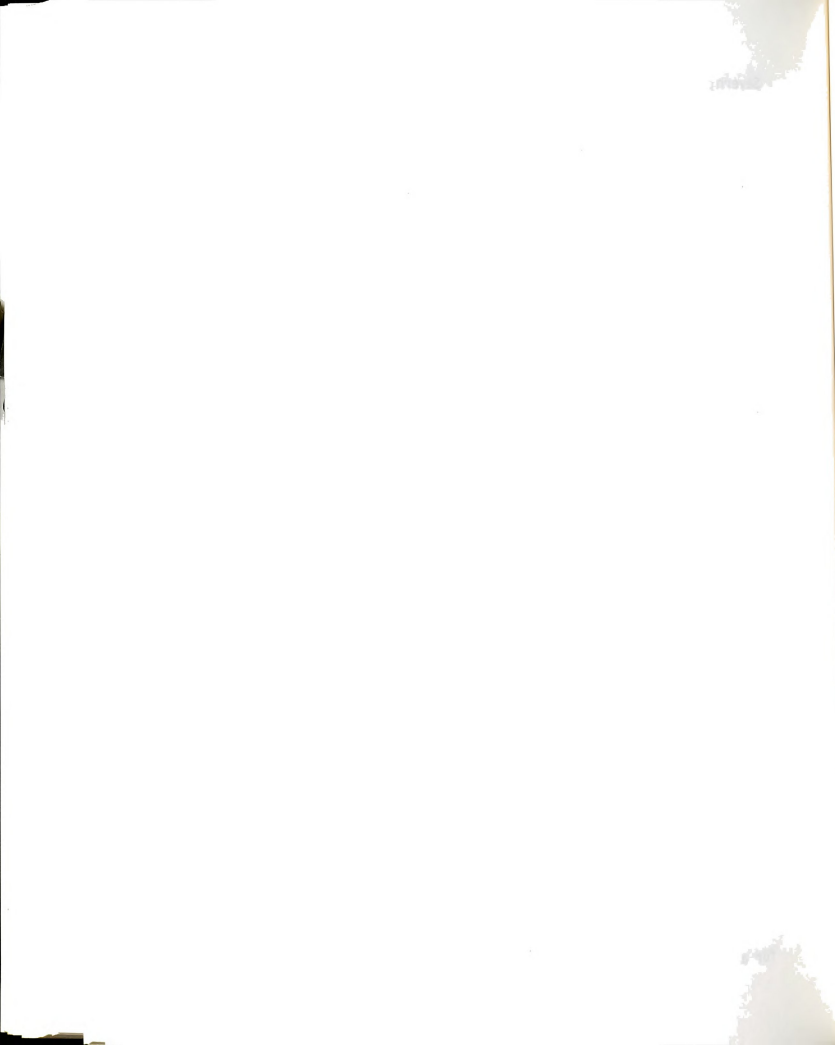
Several of Parrish's heroes, like Craig, get themselves involved in mysterious and quasi-legal proceedings. Philip Severn (The Mystery of the Silver Dagger), for example, finds a message in an ornate box. Since he is in government employ sets out to find the author, as he suspects it involves illegal arms shipments to Chile.

Severn, of course, plans to put a stop to such illegal trafficking by an "authorized" agent in the United States.

The Strange Case of Cavendish tells a story similar to Gordon Craig's tale. In this case, the reader is led to believe that Frederick Cavendish has been murdered for his money, but the truth is finally revealed when Jim Westcott, the hero and Cavendish's friend, helps law enforcement officers find Frederick and solve the case of the mistaken corpse. As in Gordon Craig the plot to obtain an inheritance through illegal means failed.

The law takes an odd turn in the tale Molly McDonald. The army payroll has been stolen by the Fort commandant who has been blackmailed by the villain, DuPont. Later the payroll is recovered by soldiers who have followed the trail of the commandant, supposing that he had been abducted by the villain, since the soldiers under Major McDonald assumed that the commandant could not be a thief.

The law as it concerns the military appears frequently in Parrish's stories, since many of them are set in the military world. Bob Hampton (Bob Hampton of Placer) is unjustly accused by a fellow officer of a murder he did not commit; he is dishonorably discharged and spends ten years in prison after being sentenced by a military court. Finally, his innocence is revealed. Brick Hamlin (Molly McDonald) is a similar victim. A fellow officer accused him of cowardice in battle which results in a demotion. After the Civil War Brick, even though he is a former Confederate officer, chooses to reenlist in the regular army. Then, as a sergeant in the Cavalry, he is again falsely accused of shooting an officer, arrested and jailed for a short time until the truth comes out.



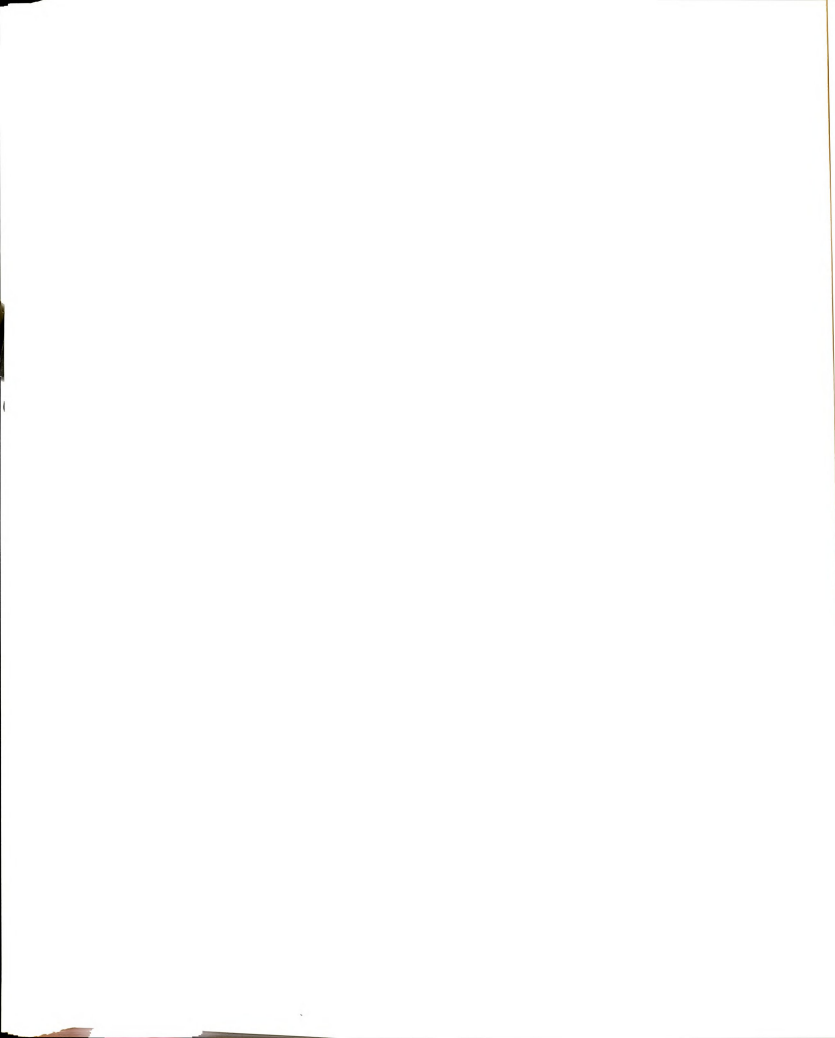
In Wolves of the Sea, the hero, Anson Carlyle, is put on a prison ship and sent to America as an indentured slave because of his anti-military activities in England and Ireland. He had led a rebellion against the existing military forces of the Crown.

Lt. Philip Dessaud, the hero of The Air Pilot, comments on the law of the military, "Being an army man ... I simply obey orders."⁵ In The Air Pilot German agents try to bribe Dessaud, the air pilot, and when that fails, they try to sabotage his plan, which in turn brings in American law enforcement officials.

Two stories, Keith of the Border and Gift of the Desert, deal with law enforcement in the border patrol. The border patrol aids Deborah Meredith (Gift of the Desert) after she flees from an arranged marriage and Jack Keith aids Hope as she tries to escape the villain who holds the secret of her past.

The Law and the Heroine

Most of Parrish's female characters accept the law -- both spiritual and temporal -- without question an indication of their general passivity of character. All of them accept the ultimate power of the law, especially as regarding marriage. When several of the heroines are forced into "loveless" arranged marriages, their response is one of passive acceptance except for the consummation of the marriage. Deborah Meredith (Gift of the Desert) fought the actual marriage ritual but was nevertheless married against her will to the villain, Bob Meager. However, she vowed if he tried to take advantage of her she would



... kill herself, kill him if necessary! He should never touch her - never! She would die first, die gladly, but Bob Meager would never possess her alive.⁶

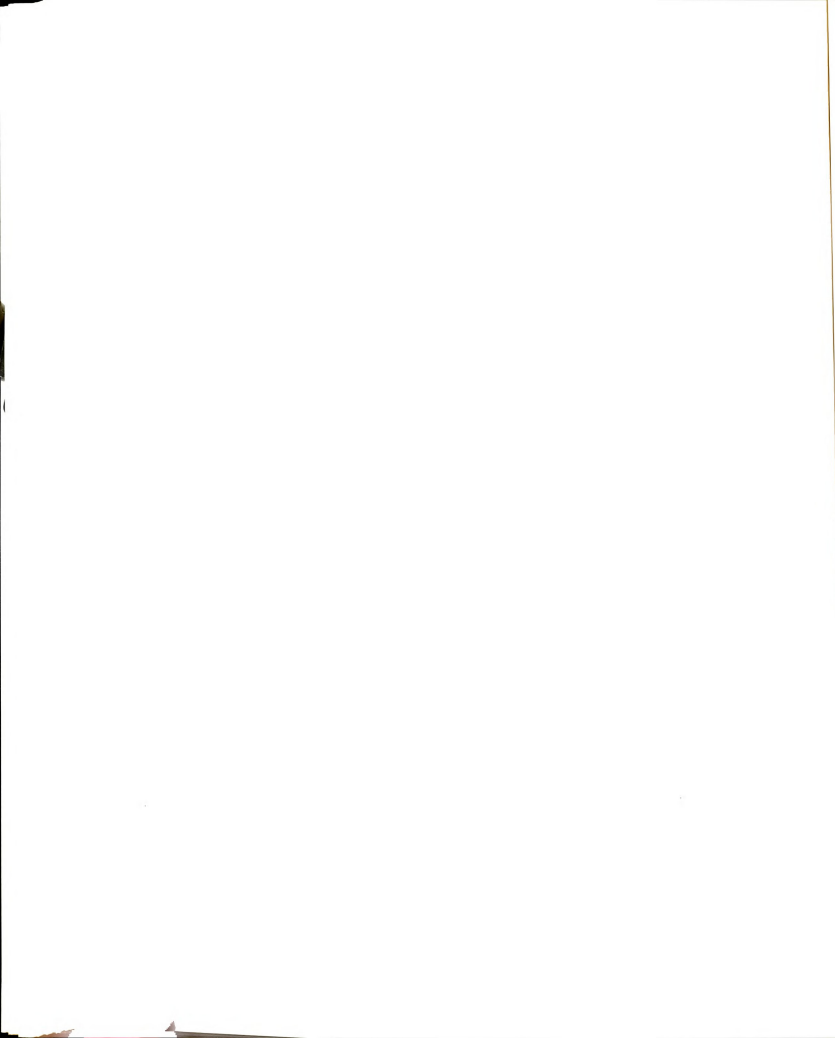
Jean Denslow, heroine of My Lady of the South, responds similarly after marrying the hero, Elbert King, who is actually masquerading as another. Jean marries King knowing he is not really Calvert Dunn because she wants a way out of the prearranged marriage; it was accidental that King appeared when he did. Directly after the marriage, which takes place early in the story, Jean lashes out at King,

... You thought me helpless, and - and in your power, but I am not ... I am going to Fauvieu alone - alone!
... If you dare attempt to follow me I will shoot you in your tracks as I would a dog - ⁷

However, by the end of the tale, Jean is more than willing to remain the wife of a Yankee, Lt. King.

Noreen Harwood, heroine of The Red Mist, is saved from marriage with the villain, Anse Cowan, by the hero, Sergeant Tom Wyatt. Noreen tells Tom, "I - I would rather be dead than have that foul beast touch me."⁸ In order to ensure that Noreen will not have to marry Anse ever, Wyatt persuades Noreen to marry him as an "opportunity to escape from that brute."⁹

Two of the heroines, Eloise Lafreniere de Noyan (Prisoners of Chance) and Lady Doris Darlington (The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel) make no protest but accept the arrangement because a parent desires it. Since Eloise's father arranged her marriage to Charles de Noyan, Eloise was exceptionally passive and obedient; she voiced no objections even though she really loved Geoffrey Benteen. In fact, she employs Benteen to find her husband when DeNoyan is captured by the Spanish. Later when a priest questions her about her



marriage to DeNoyan, she replies, "It was the desire of my father, and the will of the church."¹⁰

Lady Doris Darlington tells (Jack) John Stephens when he tries to get her to divorce Darlington,

I - I would go back to my husband ... It is true that my heart would not be there, but my duty would ... to do that which is right ... the verdict of my own conscience ... conscience lives.¹¹

Stephens is not convinced, thus she continues,

it (the marriage) exists, nevertheless, acknowledged before the world. The laws of England do not grant divorce under any such plea, even if I were to consent to the degradation of seeking one.¹²

Apparently Eloise felt obligated on two levels of the law, spiritual and temporal, whereas Doris thought only of the temporal level. Characteristic of all of Parrish's heroines, both remained faithful to their marriage, even though they were unhappy, until released by the deaths of their husbands.

Edith Brennan allowed herself to be talked into a loveless marriage because of pity for the man who loved her (Charles Brennan had loved Edith since they both were children and when they were young adults Charles saved Edith's life), but he was mortally injured. Charles' dying wish was for Edith to marry him, which she did. Later, Edith barely avoids a second marriage to Charles' brother, Frank. Because he loves her and she does not love him, Frank tries to make Edith feel morally and legally bound to marry him.

Viola Bernard (Henley) (Gordon Craig) does defy the law at least temporarily when she leaves her abusive husband, however, she

does not seek to divorce him nor to claim any part of the estate to which he is heir.

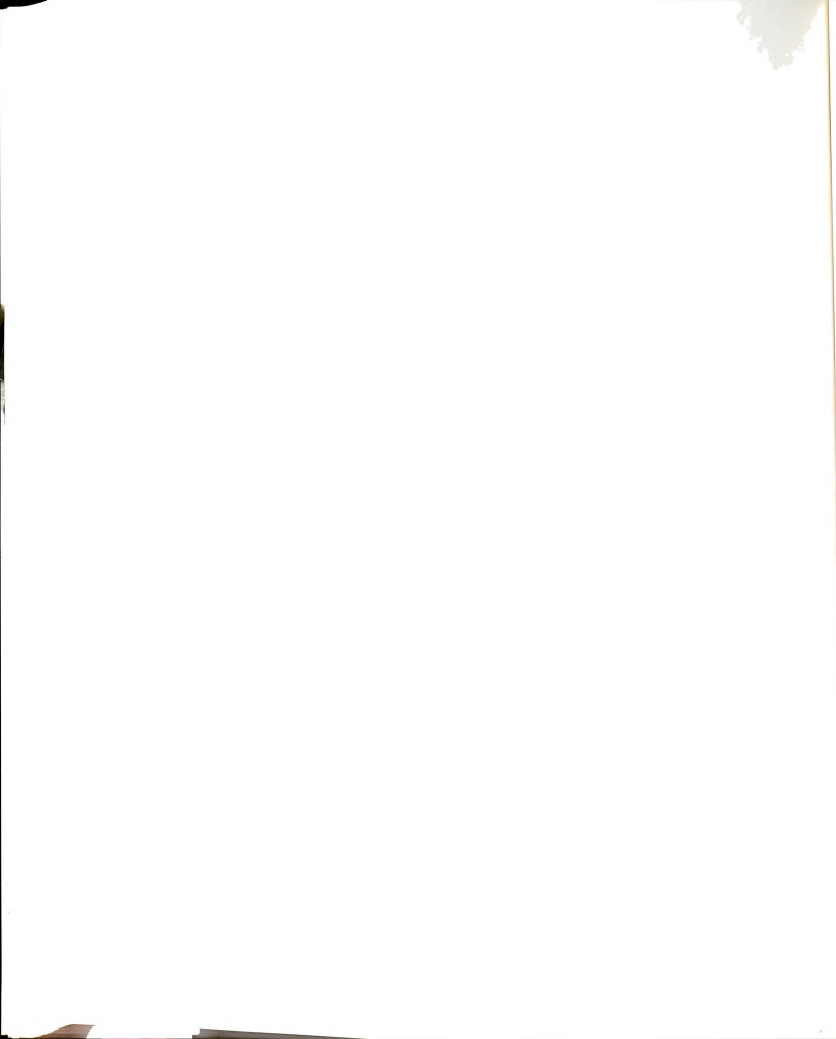
Beth Norvell (Beth Norvell) has a similar problem with the law. Her employer, Biff Farnham, who runs the road show of which she is a part, absconds with the proceeds after he talks Beth into marriage. When Beth discovers the truth she is devastated; she also cannot love a liar, a thief and a cheat. She shrieks at Farnum, the villain,

You have openly insulted and degraded me ... the law may continue to hold me as your wife, but I am not your wife. The record of the church may so name me, but they are false ... Do not touch me.¹³

Even when Beth confesses to Tom Winston how much she loves him, she does not attempt to divorce Farnham. Like other heroines she does not defy the law, either spiritual or temporal, even though she will not live with her scoundrel of a husband. She is the one heroine who convinces the hero, Tom Winston, to wait for her until her stage contract expires.

Several other heroines have jobs, Stella Donovan is a newspaper reporter (The Strange Case of Cavendish), but she quit her job regardless of the possible legal entanglements. Both Stella and another newspaper reporter, Helen Probyn, (The Air Pilot) are careful not to break the law by getting information by illegal means. Each does tell some "white lies" occasionally in order to get interviews.

Helen Probyn does express considerable doubt about whether the law could protect the hero, Philip Dessaud from injustice after he kills one of the villains, Baron Von Franzen. She tells him,



... your only hope of escape from being charged with his murder is to leave Chicago ... the law! What can the law have to do with the case? Has the law prevented you being held prisoner and robbed? Has the law saved the humiliation of being here?¹⁴

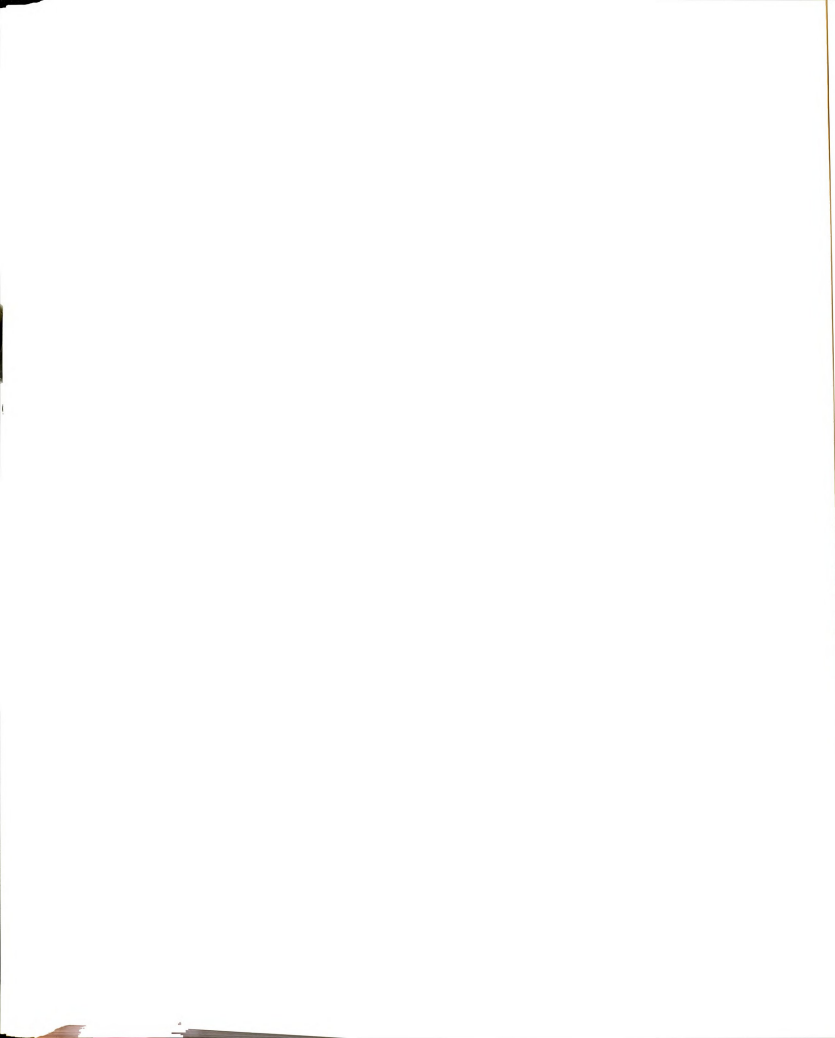
Obviously, Helen has little respect for law and its ability to bring justice at this point in the story.

Helen Longdale, alias Marie Gessler (The Mystery of the Silver Dagger), poses as a revolutionary and a messenger to the Chilean Junta in order to gain information for her boss, Adolph Krantz, a U.S. government official. Marie's activities as a revolutionary are not illegal as she is working for the U.S. Secret Service.

For Molly McDonald (Molly McDonald) the law poses a purely emotional problem for her, since she must come to terms with the realization that her father, a post commander, stole an Army payroll for his own purposes. She suffers briefly over this fact but finally realizes it is not her problem after all.

The Law and the Villain

The villains in Parrish's novels deal with the law differently. They defy it, adapt it, and use it for their own devious purposes. Many of the villains and their associates have legal training, but choose to use the law for their own benefit. In The Strange Case of Cavendish Patrick Enright leads the weak cousin, John Cavendish, to first steal his cousin Frederick's new will which disinherits John, by convincing John that he cannot inherit unless he does exactly as Patrick tells him to do.



Enright had prepared a second will for Frederick Cavendish; this one disinherited his cousin, John. Enright decides to force John into following his instructions so that John can inherit after all and his fee for legal services will be one hundred thousand dollars. If John refuses Enright will present a carbon copy of Frederick's second will in court and still collect a substantial fee as he had acted as Frederick's lawyer also. Enright tells John

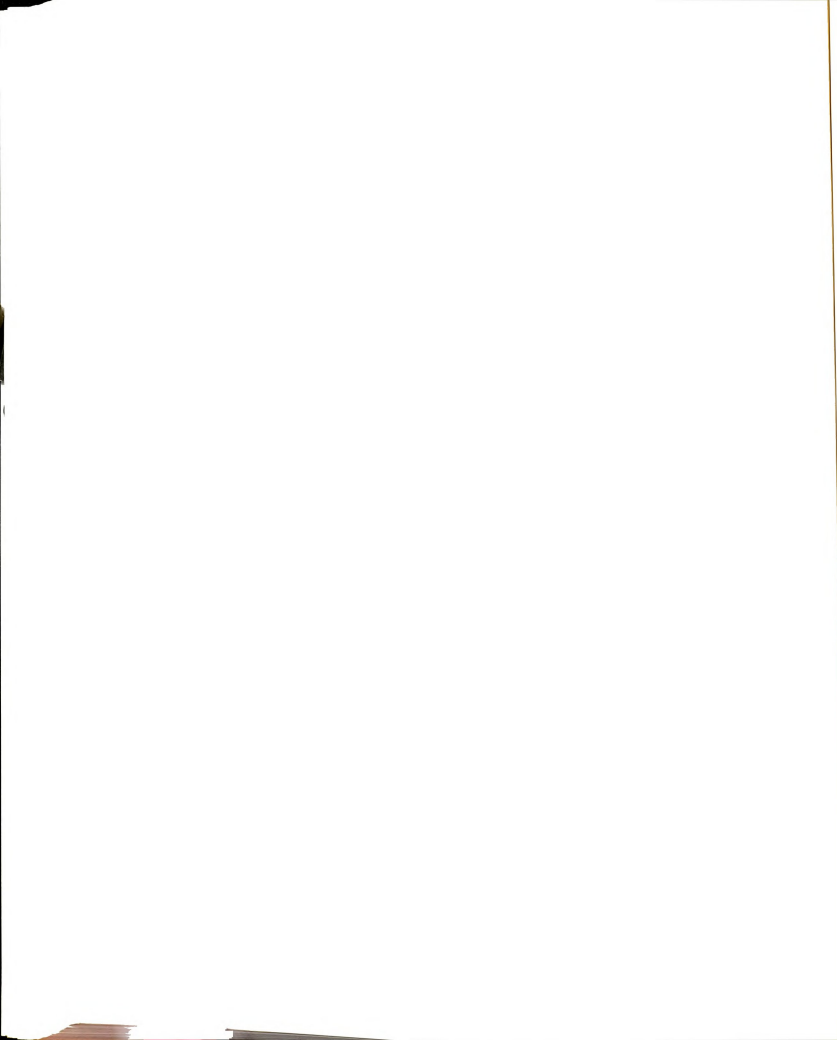
I have ... performed an unprofessional act (withholding the will) which, if known, would expose me to severe criticism ... law, even there is no taint of criminal intent about my conduct ... my course would be fully vindicated, were I now to go directly before the court and testify to the existence of a will.¹⁵

Greedy lawyers play a central role in the Gordon Craig story, as lawyers P. B. Neale and Justus C. Vail convince Gordon to pose as the real heir, Philip Henley, in order to settle an estate from which they will get a sizeable fee.

Bob Meager, the villain of Gift of the Desert, has a similar plan in mind as he returns to the family homestead to claim the property of his late father. It turns out that Bob had caused his father's fatal accident since he could not wait to inherit the ranch naturally. Bob perverts the law further when he forces the heroine, Deborah, into marriage using a timid justice of the peace to perform the ceremony. When Deborah says, "But such a marriage will not be legal, no court would ever sustain it,"¹⁶ Meager responds

... I don't ever remember caring a damn what the law says, since I was a kid. Here's my law, when it come to that. (He slapped the gun holster on his hip.) An there ain't nobody tells me what I shall do.¹⁷

Judge Garrity, although not the sort of villain Meager is, supports Meager because he is afraid of him: "Bob's quite right,



miss ... He's got the law with him, an' the witnesses."¹⁸ Later it is revealed that Garrity has tried to work a deal with the hero, Dan Kelleen, concerning shares in a gold mine, but is refused. Kelleen tells him:

I knew what you thought of me before; that I was an outlaw, with a price set on my head, that you could kill me if necessary, and no questions would ever be asked or you could have me arrested later.¹⁹

At this point Kelleen feels "Garrity might be truly dangerous - a sly, treacherous villain," thus he had to keep the gun trained on him and Meager.

McCann (Contraband) is another villain who bends the law to satisfy his greed. McCann forces the Frenchman, Bubors, to lie about the ship on which they are carrying contraband (copper) in the early days of World War I. Hollis, the hero, says of McCann,

McCann is a villain by nature; ... when the fellow became suddenly plunged into this adventure ... he found himself utterly outside the limits of the law ... he must extricate himself at any cost.²⁰

At the same time Hollis tells Vera Carrington, the heroine, that McCann may attempt to force her to marry him, so that she cannot testify against him if he is ever brought to court.

Commissaire Cassion, the villain of Beyond the Frontier, lies constantly. At one point he promises to aid the hero in escaping from jail if the heroine will consummate their arranged marriage. Cassion knows he has the authority to release DiArtigny from jail. This time the villain is motivated by lust.

Several of the villains or associates of the villains take advantage of a wartime situation for personal gain. In The Red Mist, an old scoundrel, Ned Cowan, kills Major Harwood, the heroine's

father, in order to settle a long-standing land feud, but pretends his motive is defend the South against the North. Captain Fox, a Union officer, says of Cowan,

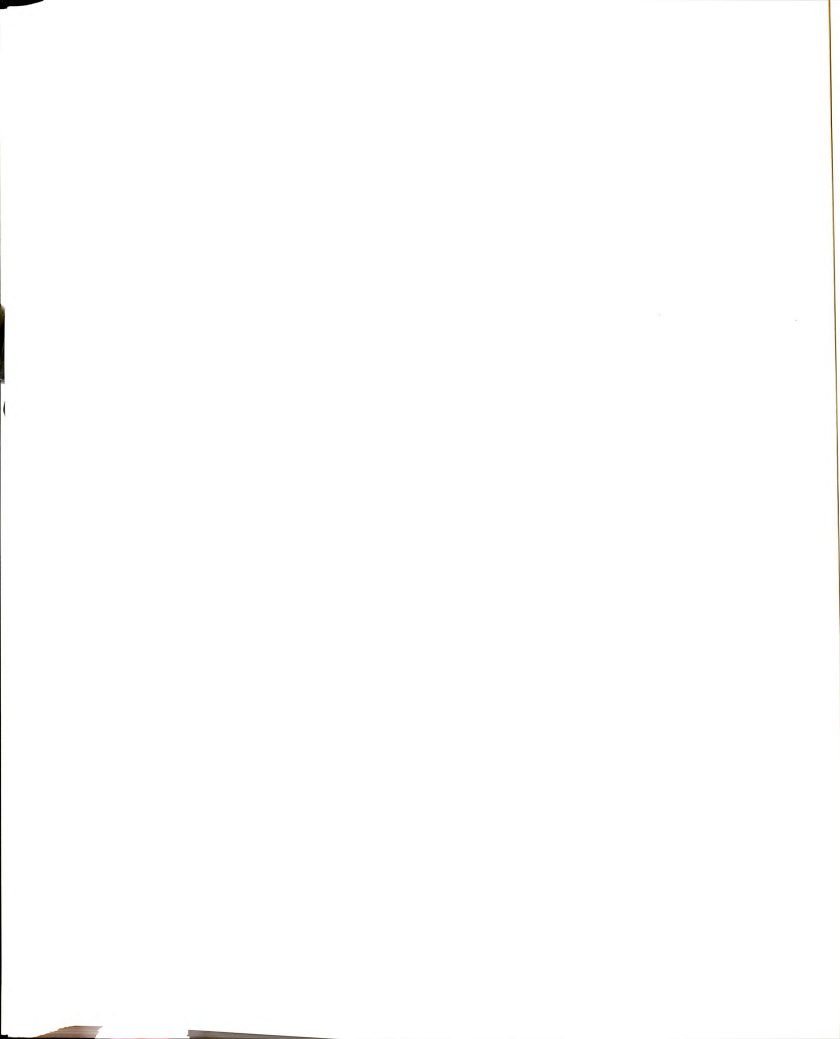
To the best of my belief the fellow doesn't give a whoop for either side. he's just a natural born devil, and this war gave him a chance to get the hell out of his system ... he is a fiend for cruelty ... ²¹

Sanchez, a greedy mate aboard the Donna Isabel (The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel) murders Lord Darlington while trying to take a larger share of the gold aboard. Murphy (Bob Hampton of Placer) figures to cover up the slaying of an officer by arranging for Hampton to take the blame. That leaves Murphy free to pursue illegal schemes within the military. The half-breed villain of A Sword of the Old Frontier, Black Peter, will work for the highest bidder with no worry about the legality of it. He sells military secrets, lies, steals, cheats and at one point impersonates the hero by stealing his uniform and packet of messages.

Simon Girty (The Maid of the Forest), based on an actual renegade of that name, is a villain similar to Black Peter. He, too, changes allegiance when the profit is greater, however, he apparently wants the hero to judge him not as a villain when he says to Joseph Hayward,

Let us have frankness between us. I come ... on a mission of peace ... all I ask is fair speech, and guidance.²²

Many of the stories feature parasitic secondary characters who for one reason or another attach themselves to the villain. Greed is often the motive; sometimes greed coupled with a desire for revenge. These secondary characters are neither crafty or skillful



enough to manipulate the law for their own gain, so they attach themselves to a villain smarter than they. As associate villains, they often assist the chief villain to violate or bend the law. For example, the Mexican cowhands and farmhands in Gift of the Desert go along with the villain, Meager, in hopes that he will reward them when he receives his inheritance. One such character is Juan Sanchez, whom Meager had made a foreman. He is described as:

a swarthy, evil-eyed half-breed, with a long mustache and a livid scar on one cheek. Deborah had heard he left Mexico in fear of his life ... he treated the men under him as slaves, ruling them by fear.²³

His constant companion was a boy named Pedro with a "cruel mouth, and a face hideous from pockmarks."²⁴ The reader soon discovers that Sanchez and Pedro hope to share Meager's inheritance when his father dies. To help insure this the two Mexicans act as witnesses to validate the marriage between Bob and Deborah.

The crew of the Donna Isabel squabble over the fortune (three million pesos) uncovered in the hold of an ice-bound ship, The Sea Queen. Cole, the mate, is described as "mad as a March hare as he buried his hands in the coins."²⁵ They realize, however, that they will all die unless they leave the chest of gold and try to get out of the ice-bound waters. Only Jim Cole decides to return to the Sea Queen's hold to try to retrieve more loot. He is last heard from, "chopping at the ice in the lazarette."²⁶ His lust for gold costs him his life.

Another minor character, Hugo Chevet, the uncle of the heroine in Beyond the Frontier, forces his niece Adele into a marriage with a vicious, greedy man. Chevet reminds Adele that she must marry

Cassion as he, Chevet, is her legal guardian and is entirely within the law when he insists that she go through with an arranged marriage. Chevet figures to gain financially for himself when he marries his niece to a wealthy and influential man.

The Law and the Villainess

Villainesses in Parrish's novels react to the law in much the same manner as do their male counterparts.

In The Strange Case of Cavendish, Celeste La Rue, alias Sadie Copley, is the temptress showgirl who joins the crooked lawyer, Enright, in his plan to fleece poor John Cavendish of his money. She, like Enright, will twist the law for profit. After John's Uncle Fred is supposedly murdered, Celeste attempts to force John into giving her a large amount of money in exchange for her silence. As she says, "- surely you have no occasion to consider me a fool."²⁷ Of course, Celeste is not capable of such a devious plan herself, yet she is an integral part of the whole scheme - what Westcott, the hero, calls -

a desire to attain these millions without bloodshed; without risking any charge of murder. This whole affair ... was more nearly a business proposition, cold-blooded, deliberately planned, cautiously executed.²⁸

Old Sallie, the mulatto housekeeper in Gordon Craig, allies herself with forces of evil because she wants her bastard son, Charles Henley, to inherit the Henley fortune. How much she had had to do with securing false adoption papers is not clear, but she was willing to tell her tale to the crooked lawyers, Neale and Vail.

However, when questioned by Craig she denies knowing Judge Henley. Unlike Celeste, Sallie remains a shadowy character, speaking in monosyllables only when necessary. Her contact with and response to the law is different from that of other villainesses, perhaps because of her race, station, and desire to gain for her illegitimate son.

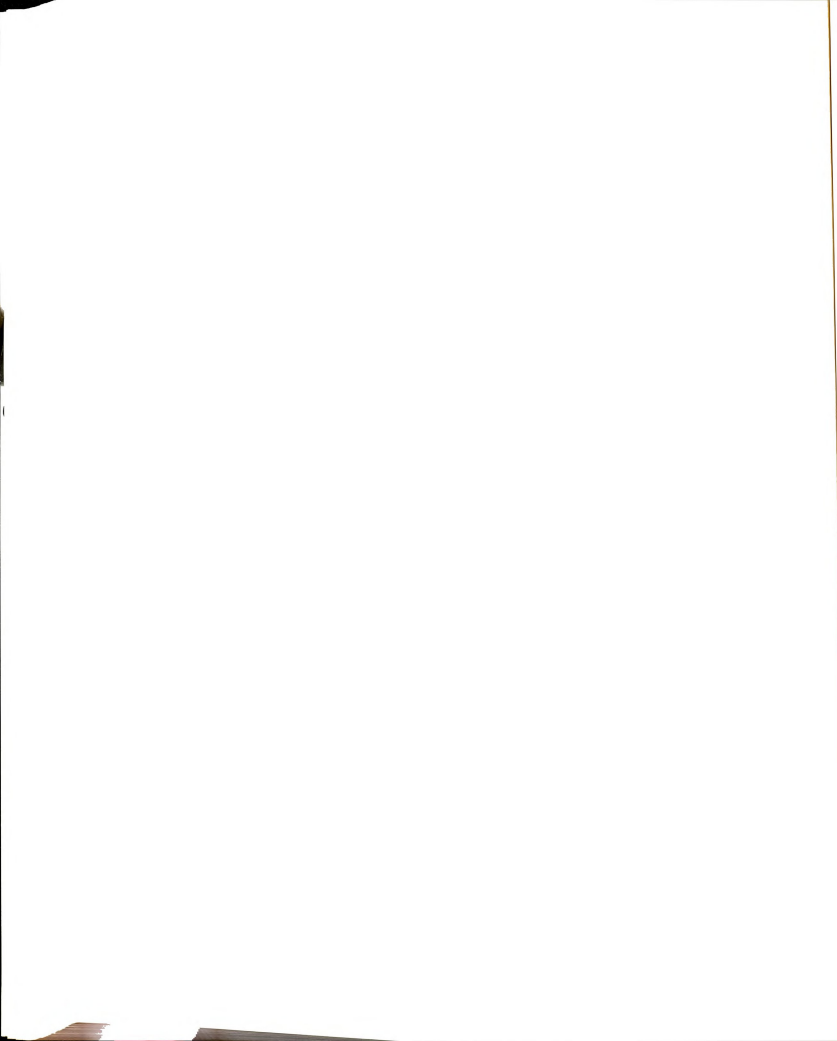
Mrs. Vera Dupont, alias Mrs. Sarah LeFevre, (Molly McDonald) is another woman so obsessed with greed that she resorts to blackmail. Molly say of her,

Mrs. Dupont had bled my father through some knowledge she had gained of his sister's family ... He gave her all he had, and then she heard of this government money ... she had known about that for several days ... had ample time to arrange the plot.²⁹

Earlier in the tale Brick Hamlin, the hero, recognizes Vera as the woman to whom he was engaged prior to the Civil War. Even then she planned to marry Hamlin to increase her social position and wealth. Brick says of her, "I learned of her selfishness and deceit - it was my money which attracted her."³⁰ Brick later finds that the reason Vera ultimately jilts him is that she thinks he has been disinherited.

Vera Dupont apparently is one of the most ruthless of Parrish's villainesses, as she spares no one in her pursuit of money. She is willing to sacrifice anyone as she does Molly's father. Vera apparently escapes retribution because at the end of the story she has run off with yet another man, a lieutenant, and part of the last loot from the army payroll.

Naladi, Queen of the Natchez, (Prisoners of Chance) is the most dangerous of Parrish's villainesses. She is described as "soft and



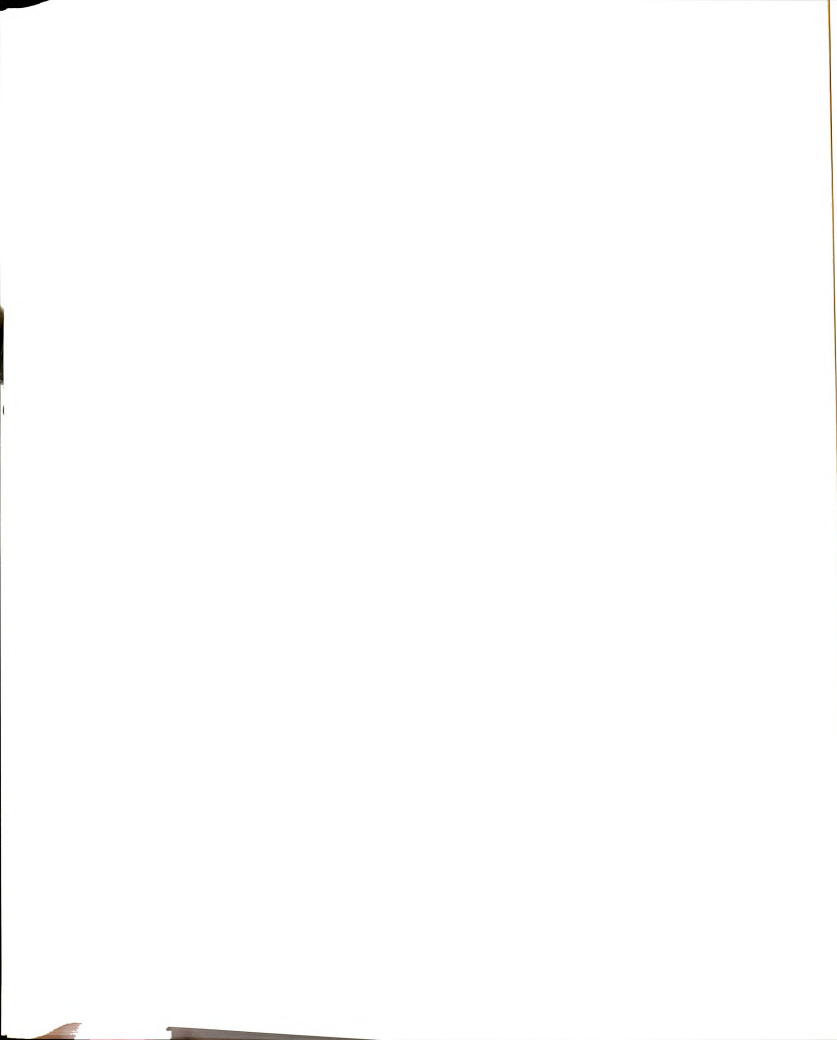
sinuous" and yet "no promise of tenderness of heart". She is "one who, by instinct and nature, was scarce less a savage than her most desperate follower."³¹ It is revealed that Naladi saw an opportunity to take command of the remnants of the once powerful Natchez (Nahuacs) by pretending that she is a reincarnation of the first queen and daughter of the Sun. Playing on their superstitions, she works toward her own ends.

Military Law in Wartime

For the most part the law of the military is a thing apart from civilian law. The law of the military is a code separate from the law of the land, a set of rules governing those involved in the military and in time of war civilians too. Military law plays an especially important part in Parrish's war tales, Love Under Fire, The Red Mist, My Lady of Doubt, My Lady of the North and My Lady of the South.

In wartime it becomes legal to do things and to behave in ways impossible in peacetime. Galesworth, the hero of Love Under Fire, a Union officer during the Civil War, operates under an assumed name and imprisons various civilians because they might act as agents for the Confederacy. During the story he falls in love with a southern lady, Willifred Hardy; at that point he applies a law which he says applies anytime, the "law of love". Afraid Billie (Willifred) will marry Captain Gerald Le Gaire, Galesworth adapts the law of love to military law. He says to Billie,

I assume the right in accordance with a law as old
as man ... the law of love, the love of a man for



one woman ... I am going to take command here now; Billie; all you need to do is obey orders.³²

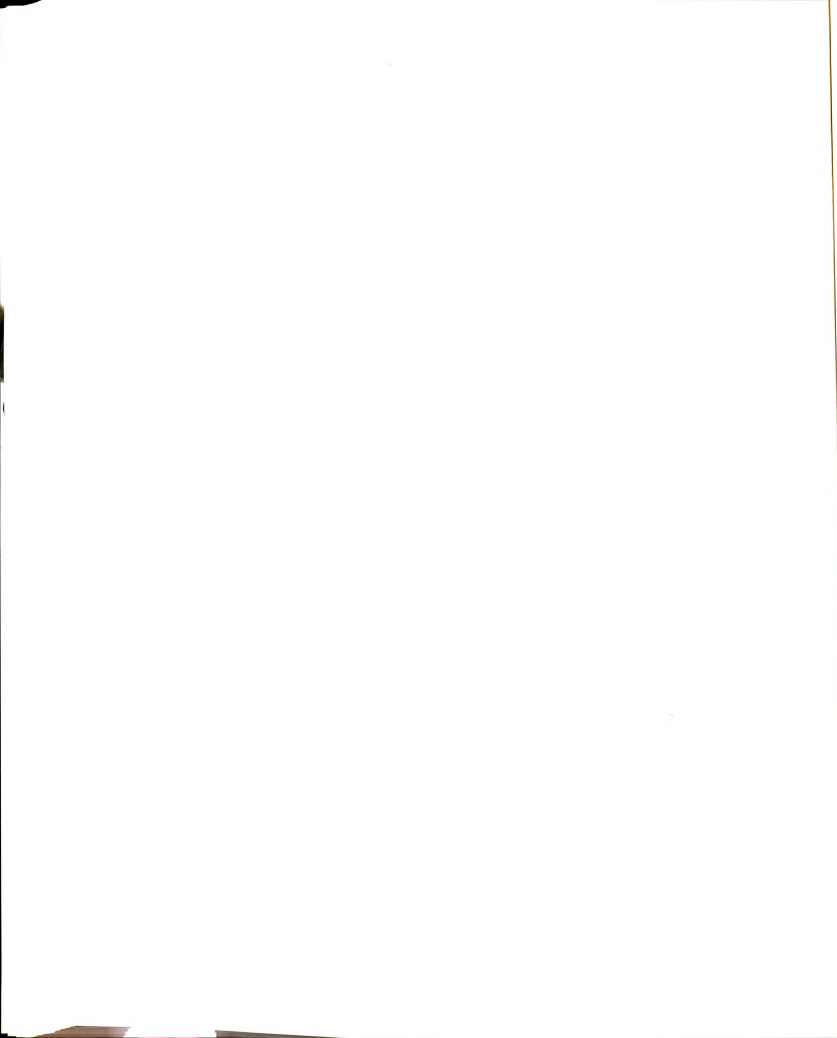
The villain of Love Under Fire, Captain Le Gaire and the hero, Lt. Galesworth involve themselves in a duel to settle matters regarding Billie Hardy. Apparently such a duel was acceptable at that time because it involved two military men during wartime, though dueling had been declared illegal in the United States many years before after the Hamilton-Burr duel. The reader can accept it since the situation allows the hero and the villain to meet in combat, much like the knights of old.

In The Red Mist, Sgt. Wyatt poses as a Northerner in order to alert the Confederate troops of impending Northern advances. Obviously, he must tell many lies to avoid capture. He does not feel any guilt in doing so for war requires such deception. However, when he marries the heroine, Noreen, to prevent her from marrying the villain's son against her will, he assures Noreen that he realizes the seriousness of their union and tells her he will not hold her to the vows later if she wants to be free.

Military law especially demands a kind of blind obedience, especially from the "good guys," the heroes and their companions. Do your duty even if it costs you your love and your life.

The Law -- Conclusion

In Parrish's novels the law is important. Its revelation comes through the characters, good and bad, and through their reaction to it. The hero and heroine cannot break the law, nor would they really consider it. At one point the hero Jack (The Last Voyage of the



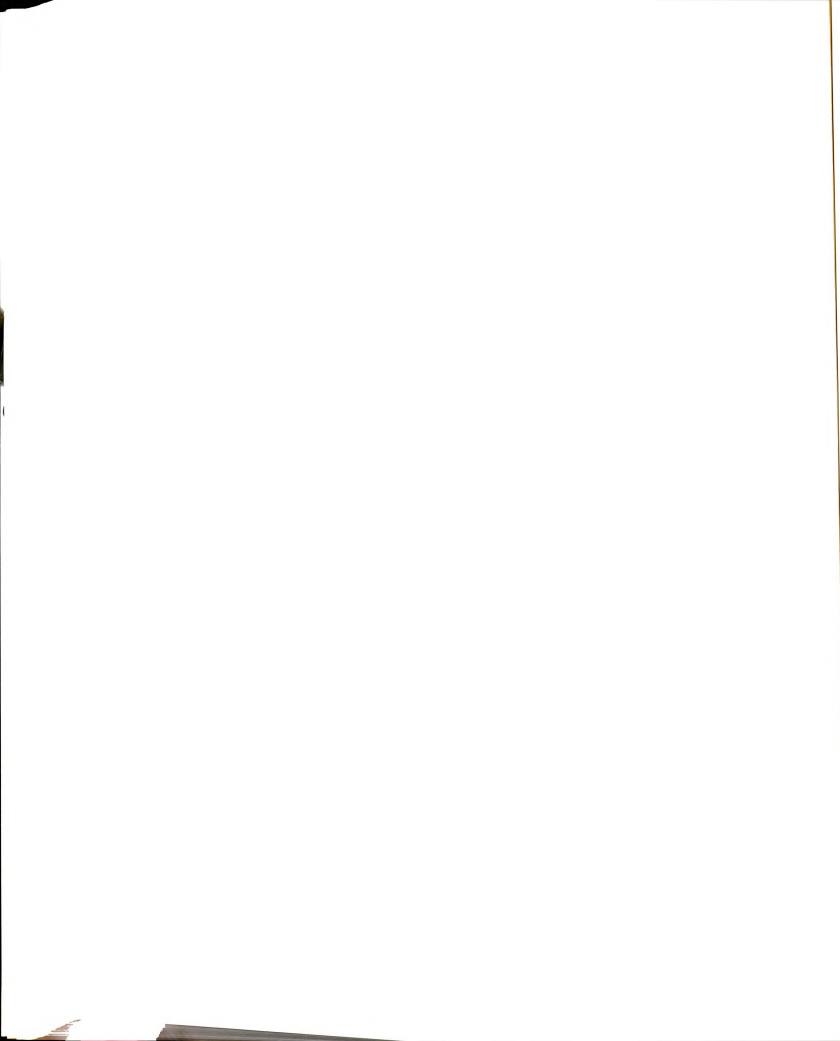
Donna Isabel) reminds Doris, the heroine, that she was forced into marriage with Lord Darlington but she reminds him that her marriage vows are sacred. She tells Jack that she cannot run away with him:

Love does not excuse all ... It might cause one to forget; but the conscience lives ... Surely you do not ask of me an illicit love?³³

Parrish's characters respond to the law in a predictable fashion. The hero and heroine usually respond with blind obedience, especially those in the military. They view the law as something extraordinary, beyond the world of reality. They are willing to sacrifice for the law, their lives if necessary.

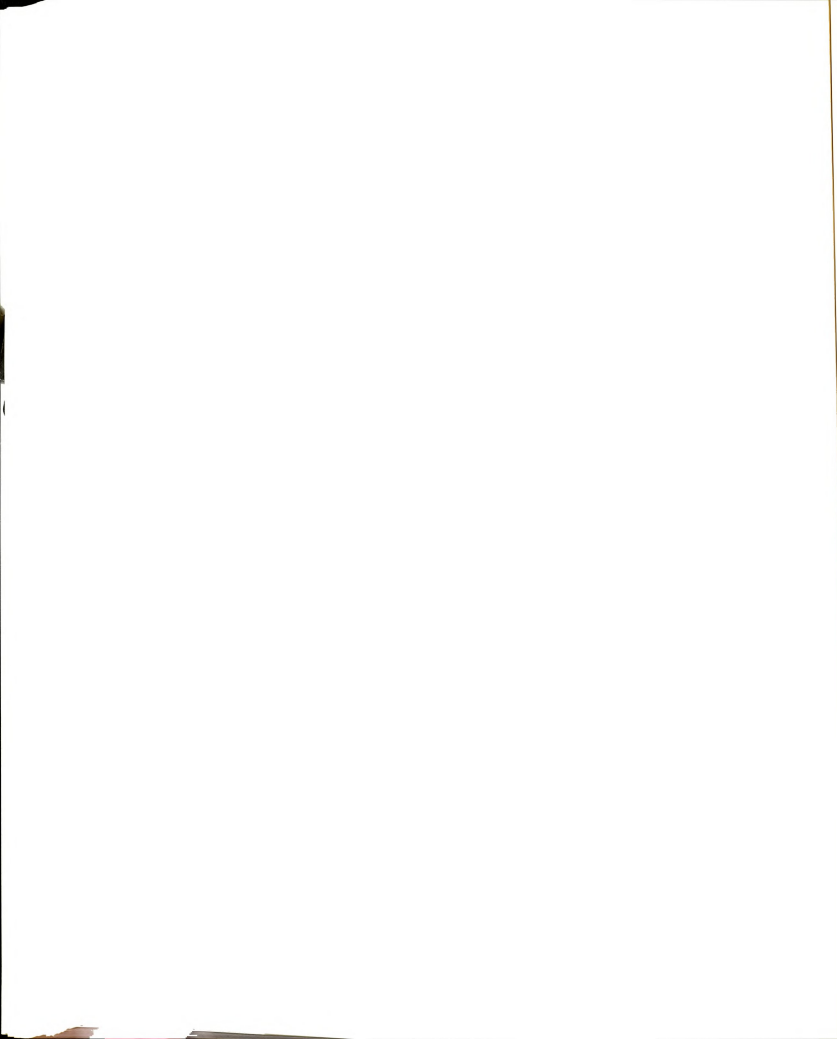
Villains and villainesses respond in the opposite fashion. They know that the law was made by man for other men foolish enough to be manipulated by it. Therefore, the villains, both male and female, use the law to their advantage and determine anyone stupid enough to adhere to the law deserves to be fleeced. The crooked lawyers in the Parrish stories are particularly skillful in making the law work for them.

All of Parrish's stories reveal how the law governs and ultimately shapes the lives of his characters. The heroes and heroines respect and abide by the law, which they regard as a moral code for living. The villains and villainesses defy, flout, ignore or use the law to their advantage; they neither respect nor abide by any moral code for living.



Endnotes

- ¹Randall Parrish, Love Under Fire, p. 201.
- ²Randall Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 421.
- ³Randall Parrish, Keith of the Border, p. 343.
- ⁴Randall Parrish, Gordon Craig, p. 13.
- ⁵Randall Parrish, The Air Pilot, p. 89.
- ⁶Randall Parrish, Gift of the Desert, p. 54.
- ⁷Randall Parrish, My Lady of the South, p. 62.
- ⁸Randall Parrish, The Red Mist, p. 117.
- ⁹*Ibid.*, p. 168.
- ¹⁰Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 421.
- ¹¹Randall Parrish, The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel, p. 320.
- ¹²*Ibid.*, p. 321.
- ¹³Randall Parrish, Beth Norvell, p. 257.
- ¹⁴Parrish, The Air Pilot, pp. 145-146.
- ¹⁵Randall Parrish, The Strange Case of Cavendish, p. 23.
- ¹⁶Parrish, Gift of the Desert, p. 51.
- ¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 52.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 53.
- ¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 279.
- ²⁰Randall Parrish, Contraband, p. 299.
- ²¹Parrish, The Red Mist, p. 63.
- ²²Randall Parrish, Maid of the Forest, p. 7.
- ²³Parrish, Gift of the Desert, p. 32.



- ²⁴Ibid., p. 32.
- ²⁵Parrish, The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel, p. 328.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 351.
- ²⁷Parrish, The Strange Case of Canvendish, p. 38.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 300.
- ²⁹Randall Parrish, Molly McDonald, p. 355.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 209.
- ³¹Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 287.
- ³²Parrish, Love Under Fire, pp. 201, 202, 204.
- ³³Parrish, The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel, p. 321.

CHAPTER VI

The Heroine

The heroines of many of Parrish's tales, especially his historical fiction, is usually a static character like Parrish's hero. She is virtuous, loyal, devoted, respectful -- especially of the law and those who represent the law -- diligent, kind, caring, courageous and responsible. Like the hero her physical appearance changes from story to story. Her eyes, used by Parrish, serve as a symbol of her gentleness, courage, strength, honesty, humility, faith, determination, and love. Parrish's heroine is a special lady who can cope with a crisis and win, even though she usually has to have assistance from the hero. She is demure, seldom aggressive, and always knows her place and what society expects and demands of her though occasionally she proves spunky. It is only in his novels that tell of the early 20th century that Parrish varies the characters of heroines. But Parrish's heroines would never attempt to compete with a man, for example, in a turkey shoot, or rescue him by sheer force from Indians, or tame a mustang or wear male attire by preference. Parrish uses male attire only once in his tales when Billie Hardy (Love Under Fire) disguises herself as her brother in order to pass more easily through enemy territory.

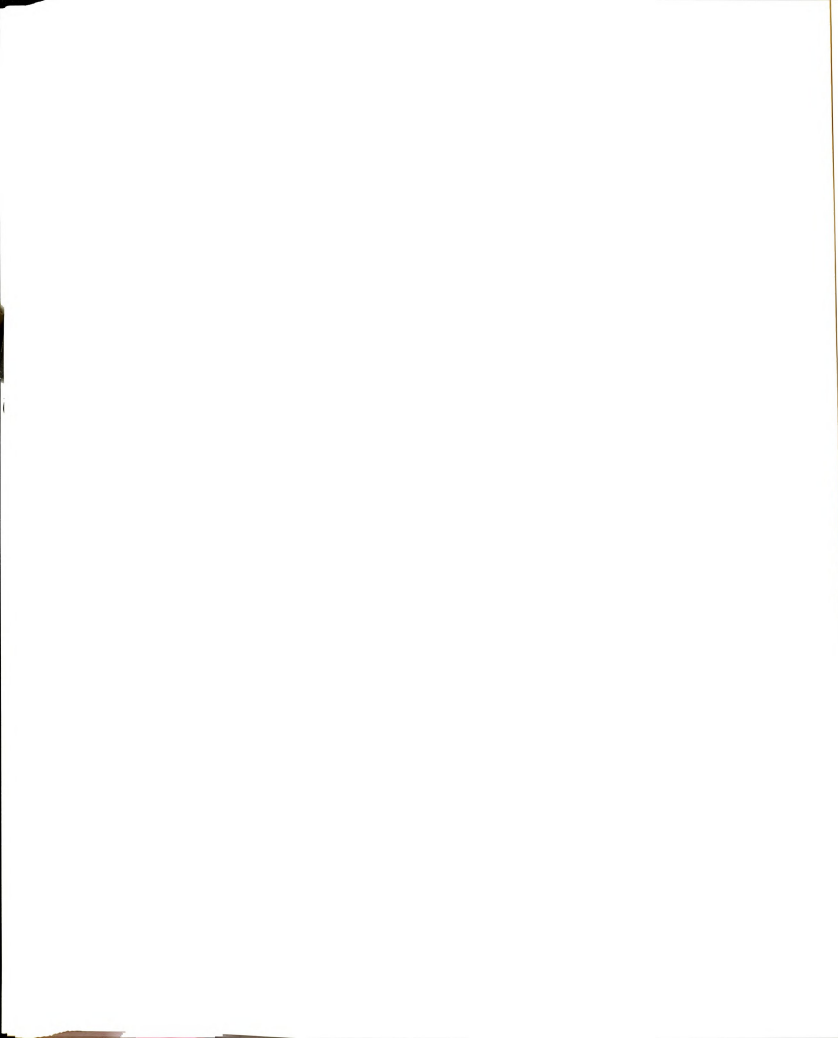
Henry Nash Smith in Virgin Land terms this ancient device "a much more promising means of effecting a real development in the heroine."¹ For Billie her development was short-lived. She was nearly

entrapped into a loveless marriage with the villain, Le Gaire, simply because her father had promised her hand to him. Luckily for her the hero married her first to prevent the mismatched marriage.

All of the heroines are young, none are over 25. All of the heroines, in spite of their backgrounds, are innocent. Even though a number are married they are all "virgins," in the spiritual sense. All of the heroines are Caucasian except Rene Duvray, who is one-quarter American Indian, but since she is three-quarters white she is thus acceptable for heroine status. Parrish seems to have determined that the heroine must be Caucasian to be worthy of a Caucasian hero.

The physical appearance of the heroine runs the gamut from light to dark hair, fair to olive skin with blue, green, brown or black or dark eyes. However, Parrish's favorite color for eyes in both heroines and heroes is grey. possible because he thought grey suggests sincerity. Also he may have thought grey suggests uniqueness of personality, one with special qualities.

Eyes are emphasized in many of Parrish's descriptions of his heroines. In every novel eyes are described more often than any other feature. Parrish writes of dreamy eyes, dark eyes -- searching eyes -- penetrating eyes -- flashing eyes -- eyes really remarkable -- smiling eyes -- mocking, yes, and puzzling eyes. To Parrish eyes were the key indicator of the heroine's mood. Sometimes they flash with anger, sometimes they reflect love, joy, determination or sadness. A woman's eyes are always honest unless she is frightened. Such is the case when Beth Norvell's husband, Biff Farnum, is murdered and Beth is terrified -- "her great eyes stared at him (the



hero had arrived at the scene) as though she confronted a ghost."² A bit later as the hero tries to persuade her to leave the scene, Beth responds thus:

her dark eyes, wild and filled with terror (were)
roving about as though seeking to pierce the
surrounding darkness.³

A short time later that wild look changes as the hero places Beth on a train to leave the area of the murder, then,
life came flashing back into her eyes --⁴

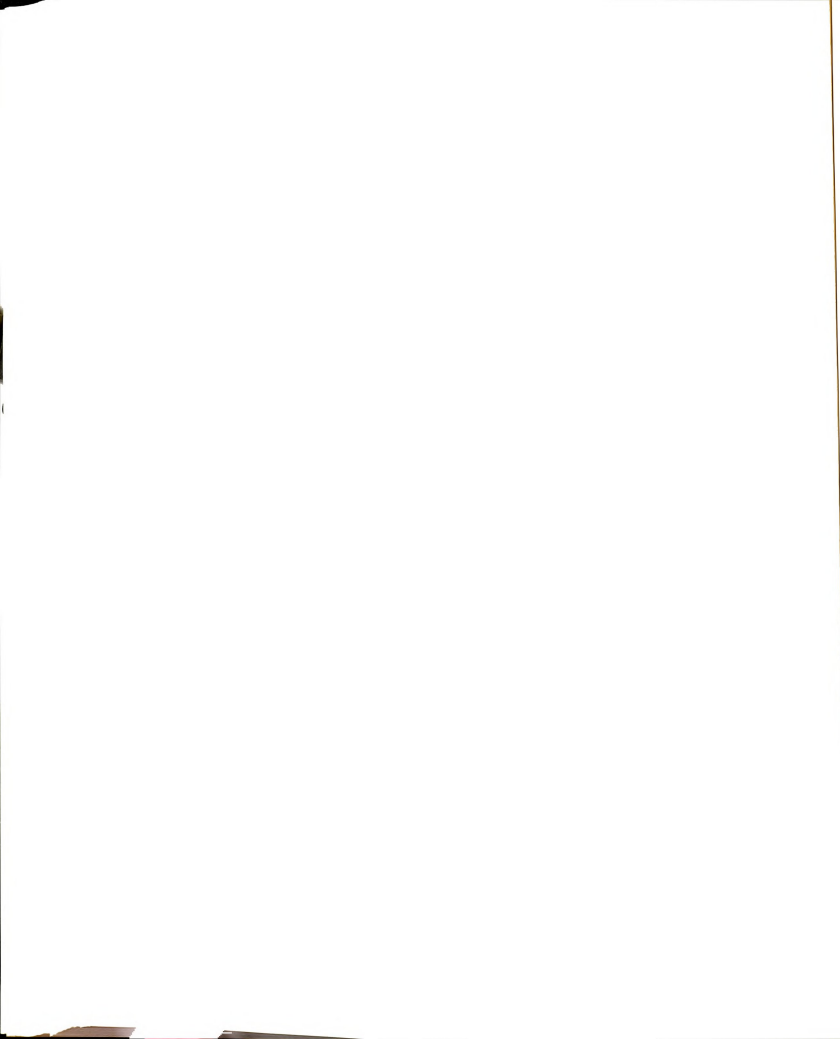
The heroine is always slim and trim, no chubby heroines for Parrish's men. However, this slimness should not be mistaken for fragility. In Gift of the Desert, the villain describes the heroine as "a spunky little tigress"⁵ and indeed she was, as she had been a nurse in France during World War I.

Apparently most of the heroines are short. A petite heroine is more appealing than the Amazonian variety of dime novels. None of Parrish's heroines would have the physical strength that Hurricane Nell had, according to Henry Nash Smith in Virgin Land when

she seizes the hero about his waist, raises him up
overhead with her powerful arms and deposits him
on the back of a wild stallion.⁶

A number of Parrish's heroines are strong enough, however, to fend off the villain in a crisis if they have guns available. For instance, Hope (Keith of the Border) shoots one of the gang after breaking away from the chief villain.

Because of her slender form the heroine can often pass through spaces that a larger person could not, a useful device. Often Parrish has his heroine slip through a secret passageway or hide behind a door or in a small space in order to avoid detection.



Parrish's heroines are very attractive. Their womanly qualities are immediately obvious; even in danger they look appealing. For example, in one situation Keith (Keith of the Border) thinks to himself when he observes Hope Waite

The long weariness of the night had left traces on her young face, robbing it of some of its freshness, yet Keith found it more attractive in the growing daylight than amid the lamp shadows of the evening before.⁷

As they ride along together he notes further:

The peculiar clearness of her complexion, the rose tint showing through the olive skin ... the soft and silky fineness of her hair ... the face not associated with surrender to evil, the chin round and firm, the lips full, yet sufficiently compressed; the whole expression that of pure and dignified womanhood.⁸

The appealing femininity of the heroine is seldom more evident than during these special impassioned moments when the hero and the heroine declare their love for each other. In The Air Pilot, Helen Probyn says demurely to Dessaud, "I thought you wished to kiss me -- only you did not dare."⁹ Then her face turns crimson and her lashes fall. Molly McDonald clings to Brick Hamlin after he saves her from the villain, "I think I have always needed you -- I love you."¹⁰ As she said these words she "swiftly lowered her lashes." Brick is overwhelmed by her femininity at this point and he asks her to marry him; she looks up at him for a moment, then again lowers her lashes and she answers, "Yes."¹¹

In many of his stories Parrish comments on other of the heroine's feminine charms. Matt West's (The Case and the Girl) heart throbs as he looks at Rita in her evening dress which "reveals her white shoulders and her rounded, beautifully mounded arms."¹²

Hands, delicate and soft with tapered fingers, always elicit comment. Occasionally a tiny foot and slim ankle are mentioned, but that is all -- never, never is there any reference to a thigh or buttocks, breast or a leg. Even when the heroine Vera Carrington is forced to climb down on a rope, the hero describes it thus, "she went down the rope and over hand, as lightly as a sailor."¹³ Knees, however, are apparently acceptable if used to describe a heroine kneeling in prayer or kneeling to keep from falling. Eloise de Noyan (Prisoners of Chance) is often described as on her knees in prayer, while Doris Darlington (The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel) kneels at the ship's rail as the ship rolls violently in a storm.

Undoubtedly, Parrish was aware that description of the physical appearance of his heroines, as with all of his characters, was an effective device to stimulate the reader's imagination.

Some of Parrish's women are modeled after Cooper's and Scott's. Thus the heroines are related to the courtly love tradition and are often passive until the circumstances demand action.

For example, Parrish's heroine, Eloise (in Prisoners of Chance) reminds one of Alice Monroe in Cooper's Last of the Mohicans since she remains passive throughout much of the tale. However, Eloise does assist the hero, Benteen, as they try to escape first the Spaniards and then the Natchez. However, unlike Parrish's other heroines, she is not forced to deal with a male villain, since the evil antagonist in this case is female. Ironically, Naladi, the villainess, actually houses Eloise within her own lodge until she can decide what to do with her. Naladi never abuses Eloise except

accusing her of weakness, lacking in what it takes to be a real woman.

A number of Parrish's heroines remind the reader of Cora Munro in Cooper's Last of the Mohicans and Hetty in The Deerslayer in their strength and courage. Both Deborah Meredith and Adele la Chasnayne keep the villains at a distance with a knife or gun; both had the will to use the weapon if necessary. Deborah Meredith is the most independent of all Parrish's heroines. She had been a nurse in World War I on the front in France and upon returning home chose to take a job taking care of an invalid lady on a ranch in a remote part of Arizona. Most of the other heroines find themselves involved in dangerous circumstances by chance rather than by choice.

Parrish's heroines are not so dull and bloodless as Richard Chase describes those of Cooper's which is characterized in his The American Novel and Its Tradition.¹⁴ In spite of the apparent passivity of many of Cooper's heroines a few are aggressive if need be. This aggressiveness proves a surprise, especially to the men whom they encounter. For example, Robert Wayne, of My Lady of the North, is appalled at the actions of the heroine, Edith Brennan, who at one point, strikes him with her riding crop:

For a moment I felt utterly indifferent to all claims of her womanhood. She had unsexed herself, and deserved treatment accordingly.¹⁵

However, this is the only time in any of the novels that a Parrish heroine ever reacts so violently against the hero. Even the encounters with the villains usually end only with threats -- the villain was promised a shooting if he tried to touch her.

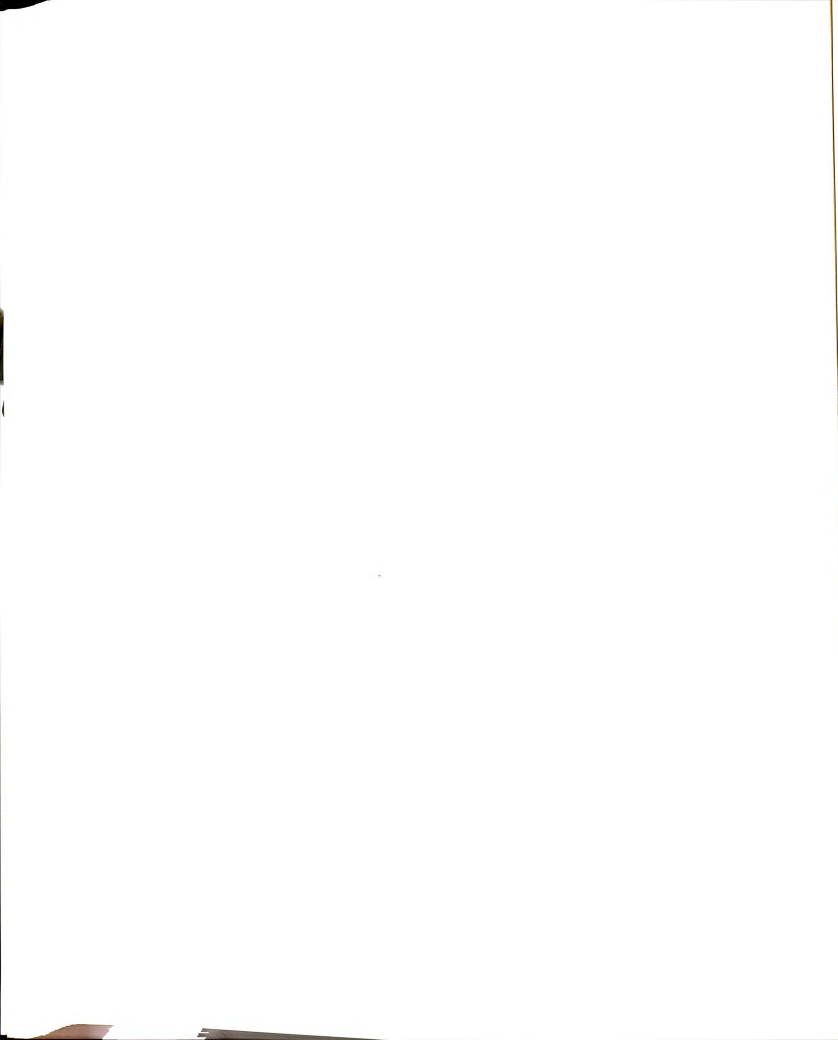
Never does the heroine resort to the unladylike behavior of the heroines in the popular dime novels. Parrish's heroine may be an excellent shot and able to help out in a pinch, but never does she assume the aggressive behavior of such heroines as Edward Wheeler's heroine Hurricane Nell (Bob Woolf, the Border Ruffian) "who can outrun, outride, out-shoot, out-lasso, and out-yell any man in town."¹⁶ Never does a Parrish heroine touch any man unless the circumstances demand it. For example, the hero may have to take the heroine's arm or hand to aid her in alighting from a horse, a carriage or train step. Even the love scenes are ordinarily limited to hand holding with occasional eye contact. The heroine holds the hero tenderly only when he has been wounded and she is distraught. Then it is possible for her to show tenderness and concern. For instance, during a fight (Love Under Fire) the hero Galesworth is injured and blacks out. When he comes to he sees "gray-blue eyes and Billie. She was kneeling there beside me clasping one of my hands."¹⁷

When Deborah Meredith (Gift of the Desert) and two soldiers find the hero, Kelleen, lying wounded in a mine shaft.

Deborah never left his side ... his head rested again on her arm ... Deborah, bathing the white face gently.¹⁸

Parrish never allows his heroines to vow revenge on those who have wronged them or their loved ones -- as Wheeler did in his tales of Deadwood Dick. Molly McDonald witnesses her father's death but she never suggests tracking down the villain and his henchman after she is rescued. The responsibility is left to the hero.

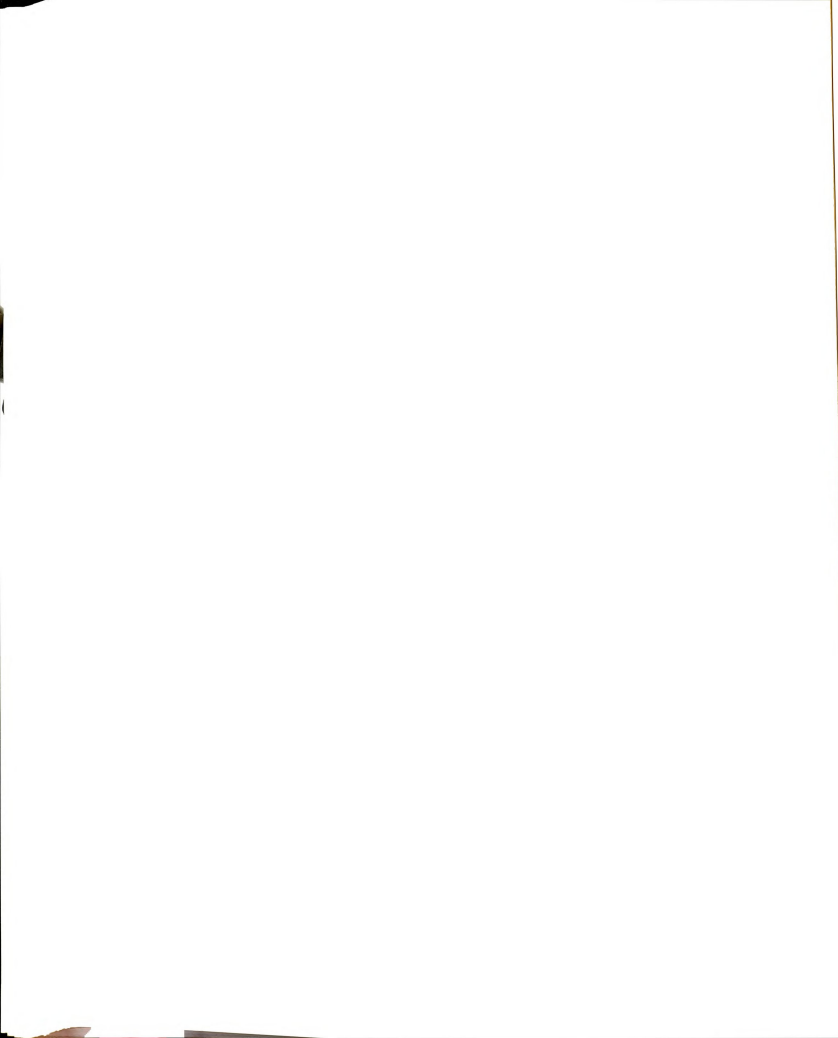
Parrish's heroines are often Cooperesque as H. Nash Smith states, "no lady in Cooper was capable of the remotest approach to



indelicate thought, speech or action."¹⁹ Parrish's heroines, like Cooper's, remain "the genteel female who had been the primary source of refinement in the traditional novel."²⁰ Thus, even in his western stories Parrish does not allow his heroine "to forget her place."²¹

In many of his stories Parrish, like Zane Grey, "championed traditional roles for women,"²² but unlike Grey's heroines many of Parrish's heroines on the surface at least are "merely simpering, dependent, submissive females". But when the occasion demands it, a surprising number of Parrish's heroines are described as "physically strong, morally courageous, purposeful women"²³ as Grey's are described by Carol Gay. One questions how the heroines could have qualities that are so apparently diametrically opposed but Parrish manages this quite successfully -- witness Eloise de Noyan who marries her father's choice but is sufficiently "morally courageous and purposeful"²⁴ to seek help from Benteen to save the husband she does not love from execution.

All of Parrish's heroines have been raised by their fathers and/or some female other than the mother. How then did Parrish's heroines acquire their social graces? Perhaps each was influenced sufficiently before her mother's death that the influence lasted on into the young adult years. Or perhaps the influence of the surrogate mother as well as the influence of the natural father accounts for her gracious personality. Only one of Parrish's heroines has a living mother; Viola (Henley) Bernard (Gordon Craig) declares that she would rather stay in the wretched little village where her husband deserted her, than go home to mother whom she fears. In spite of this, Viola's mother must have influenced her as

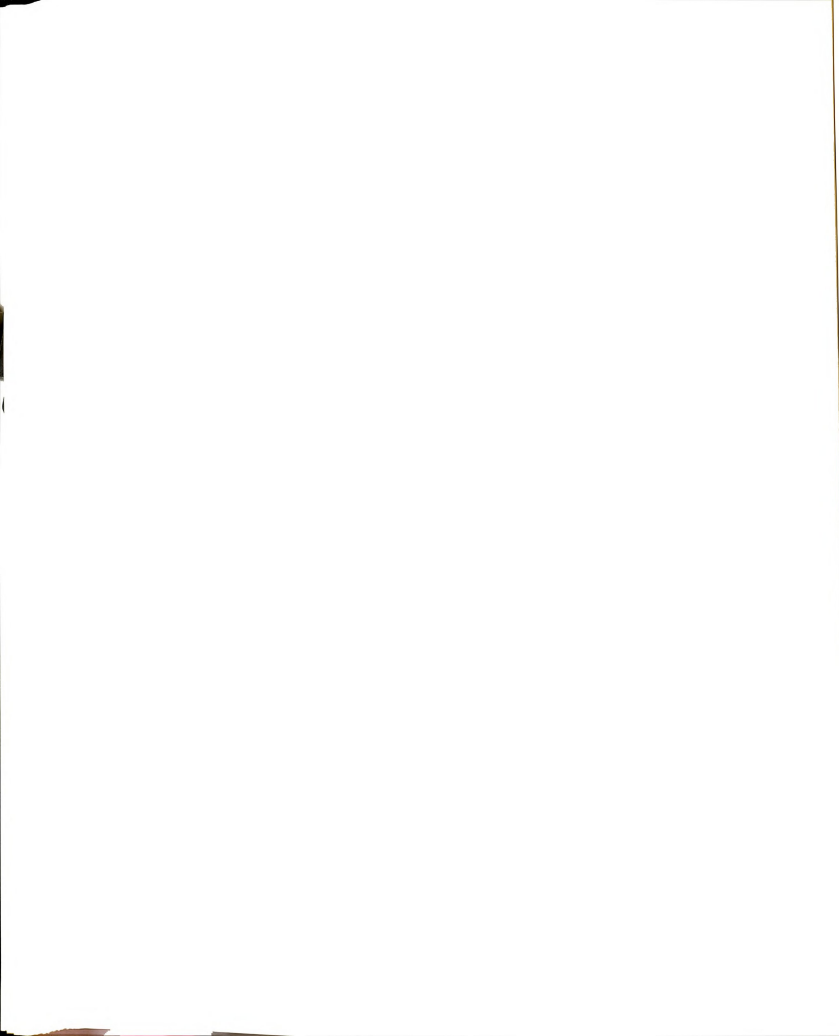


Viola is just as gracious, submissive, but at the same time, physically strong, "morally courageous and purposeful."²⁵

Since the reader does not follow any of Parrish's heroines beyond more than a year or so of her life, thus it is not possible to correctly assess how the heroine's character will develop as she grows older. Nevertheless, the reader is led to believe that she will remain much the same woman as when the reader first meets her in the novel.

Parrish used an interesting and seldom-used device in eight of his twenty-seven novels. He marries his heroine to some other man than the hero, usually the villain. This immediately raises the question of the virgin heroine; how can this be? Parrish contrives to bring it off and makes the reader through his hero readily believe that the heroine is indeed "untouched" although married. In three of his stories the heroines consummate their vows, but did so because at the beginning of the marriage they either loved their husbands (who later turned scoundrel) or accepted the marriage because of filial piety. Both Beth Norvell and Viola Henley loved their husbands initially before the men showed what villains they were; Eloise de Noyan married Charles because her father wished it.

Doris Darling was pushed into a loveless marriage with a nobleman. The reader never knows for certain whether the marriage was ever consummated. Deborah Meredith, Adele la Chesnayne and Claire Mortimer were wives in name only. Each threatened her spouse with death if he ever touched her. Edith Brennan married her husband on his death bed to grant his last request. Each time marriage was a way of saving the heroine from marriage with the villain. In each



of these cases the hero was already "smitten" with the heroine, but she married the hero only as "the lesser of two evils." Unlike the villain, the hero never attempts to push his "bride" into a relationship for which she is not ready. Such would be unfitting conduct. He must defend the honor of his lady; then if something more develops, let it.

Why did Parrish marry off his heroines either to the villain or the hero? The reader can only surmise that such a scheme further enhanced the impression of the heroine's goodness and passivity of which he sought to portray.

Although Beth Norvell and Viola Henley were poor judges of character in choosing their husbands, they had the other characteristics essential to Parrish's heroines -- loyalty, courage, determination, passivity, and honesty. But in spite of such bad judgment, each, like all the other heroines, could sense the hero's goodness, even when he represented a faction within society she hated; for example, Edith Brennan struck Robert Wayne, the hero, while trying to escape from him as she was loyal to the Union and he was a Confederate officer.

In Prisoners of Chance Eloise de Noyan's decision to wed a man she did not love but because her father wished it, further indicates Parrish's emphasis on innocence, purity, devotion, filial piety, respect for authority, passivity and dependency characteristic of his heroines.

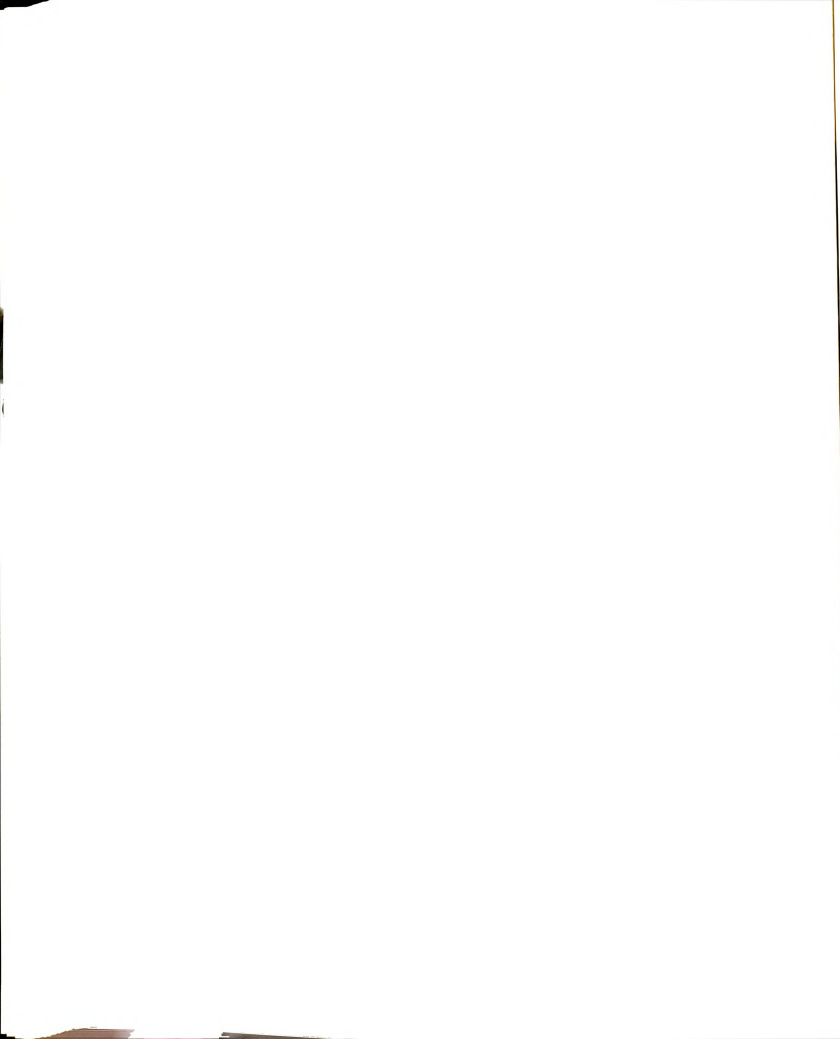
All but three of Parrish's heroines are married at the end of their stories, thus reinforcing the qualities mentioned in his heroines. His heroines are traditionalists in this aspect -- the

good heroine must marry the equally good hero and live happily ever after. Even with Marie and Natalie, marriage with the hero was not ruled out. The only instance where the hero and heroine do not wed is in Bob Hampton of Placer; obviously this could not be since Bob was the heroine's father.

Why did Parrish use early marriage in some of his tales? What better way can an author present his virtuous heroine to his reader and at the same time provide him with a situation that needs solving and a damsel in distress who needs saving as well?

Although all of the heroines are quick, alert and natively intelligent, their educational background is always vague. One heroine, Deborah Meredith, is a former army nurse in World War I, thus it is safe to assume that she must at least have had nurse's training. Adele la Chesnayne (Beyond the Frontier) had spent a number of years in a convent after her father returned to France, where she must have received some instruction from the nuns. Toinette (When Wilderness was King) also spent time in a convent. Molly McDonald (Molly McDonald) is the only heroine who has come from school. She spends the summer with her father and plans to return to finish her education. Alene Maitland (A Sword of the Old Frontier) and her cousin, Rene, come from England to join Alene's father at his command post; presumably the two young ladies had been away at school.

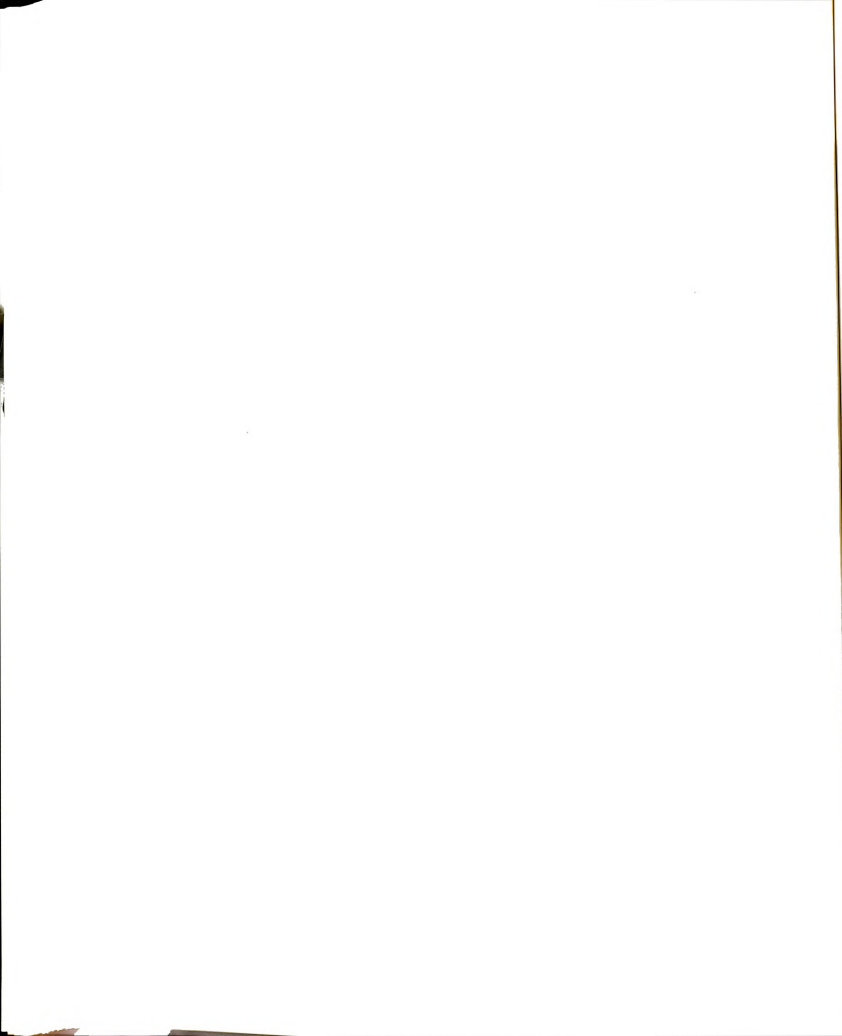
Several of the heroines speak at least two languages. Marie Gessler speaks English and Spanish. Eloise de Noyan speaks French and English, Adele la Chesnayne both French and English, but Rene Duvray speaks several Indian dialects in addition to English.



In spite of the fact that almost nothing regarding the heroine's formal education is stated, it is apparent that all of the heroines are nevertheless knowledgeable and resourceful. Parrish probably did not consider it necessary to state what educational background the heroine had, even though he often states precisely the hero's education. Most of Parrish's stories are set in times when women did not receive the same educational opportunities as men, and when society had females stereotyped as wives and mothers.

Even when Parrish started introducing "liberated" heroine he still did not explain her educational background, but rather only alluded to it, as he did in Deborah Meredith's case. Although Parrish has four heiresses as heroines -- Vera Carrington, Edith Brennan, Doris Darlington and Natalie Coolidge -- again he leaves their education vague. Vera, Doris and Natalie probably were products of finishing schools, the usual education of wealthy females at the turn of the 20th century. Edith, however, is the heroine of a Civil War tale, and there is no mention of her schooling.

Many of Parrish's heroines display some degree of passive behavior but one heroine is utterly passive -- Eloise de Noyan (Prisoners of Chance). Eloise reminds the reader of several of Cooper's heroines -- "the fair maiden who is incredibly good, childlike and weak".²⁶ Perhaps some of her behavior can be attributed to the fact that she is representative of the sheltered female who appears in much of the literature of the second half of the 18th century.



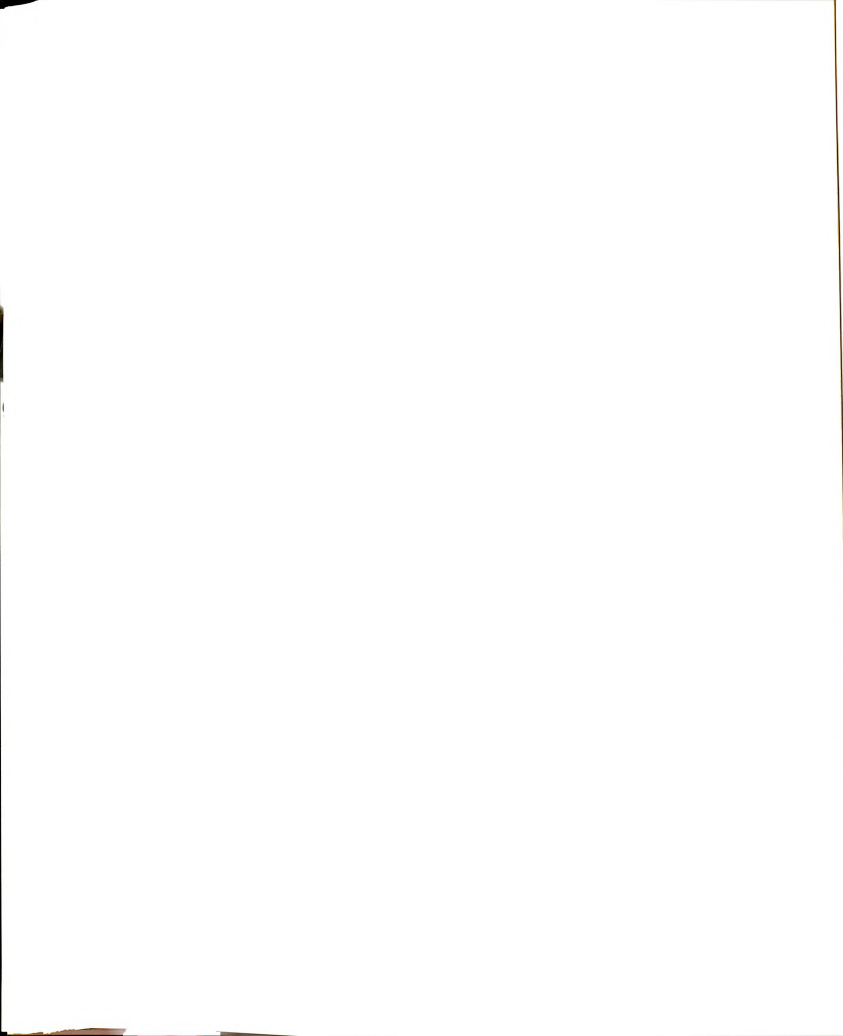
Eloise is the daughter of a wealthy Frenchman, Monsieur Lafreniere, who dotes on his only child. He keeps Eloise close to him and does not allow her to have any outside contacts or friends except for the family priest. Eloise says to Benteen, "I am left alone, without friends, saving only the pere."²⁷ Lafreniere continues to keep Eloise isolated as he plans her marriage to his close friend, Charles de Noyan, for whom he has respect as well as political regard; he never asks Eloise for her opinion. Her passive behavior shows in her deference to her father's wishes even when she tells Geoffrey Benteen, the hero (whom she loved and still does) that her marriage to DeNoyan "was the desire of my father and the will of the church."²⁸

Her deference extends to her husband as she summons Benteen to try to save DeNoyan from his scheduled execution at the hands of the Spanish captors. Eloise does not state whether she loves DeNoyan or not, but rather implores Benteen to attempt to save him.

Throughout the tale Eloise does little but bury her face in her hands, clasp her hands in prayer, or shrink in terror and sob hysterically in frightening situations; occasionally she faints. She justifies this by saying, "yes, 'tis not the spirit but the body which has become weakened -- forgive me."²⁹

The only time she gives evidence of strength and courage is when Father Andre tells her and Benteen to leave him since he impedes their flight from the savage Natchez Indians. She tells the priest, "Do you deem us dastards enough to leave you here alone?"³⁰

Even Eloise's physical appearance contributes to the impression of fragility and lack of strength. She is small and slim; and her



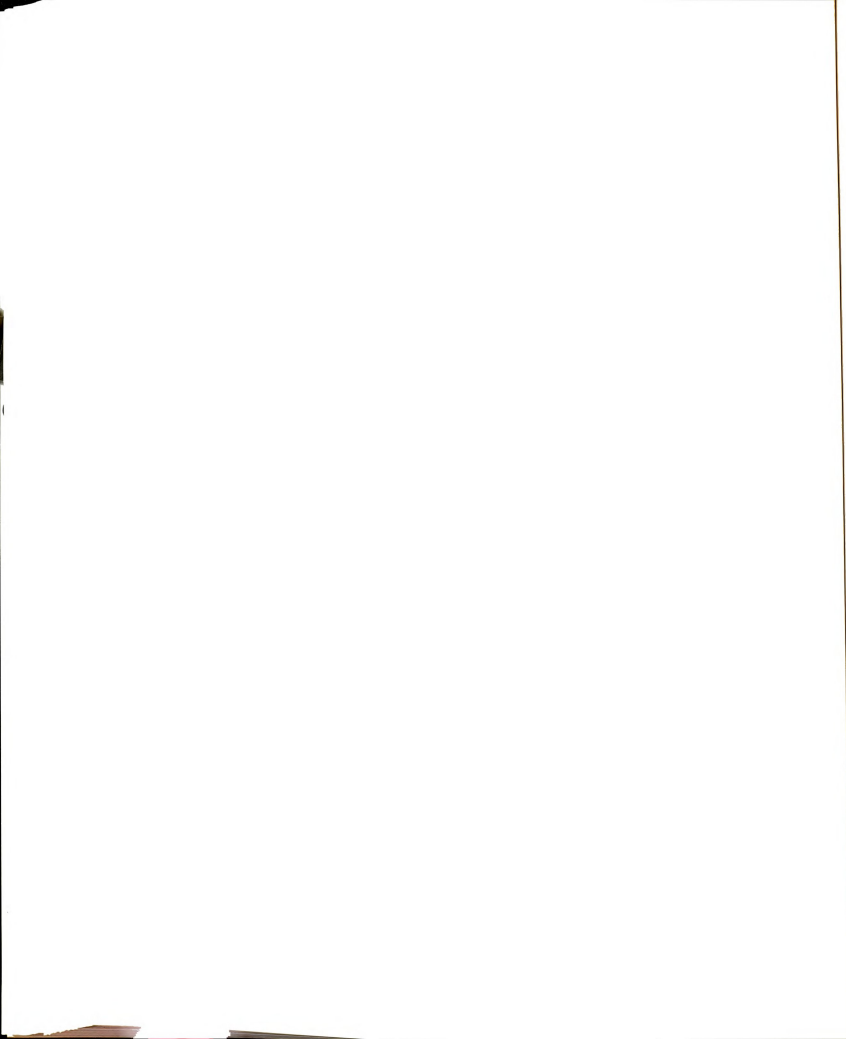
dark dreamy eyes light up her sweet, young face. This tiny little lady is reminiscent of Cooper's fragile heroine, Alice, in The Last of the Mohicans, who like Eloise expects others to look after her. Like the fragile Alice of the Cooper tale, Eloise cannot cope; she needs support, both physical and emotional, from a male.

Eloise de Noyan comes across less forcefully than any of the other heroines, but since the tale in which she is the heroine is based on fact, according to Parrish, he may have felt reluctant to tamper with the facts of the story.

Although there is little evidence to support any evolution of the hero's character, Parrish does allow for some change in the character of the heroine as the 20th century arrives and Parrish writes in that time era. Then the heroine becomes spunkier, more independent and somewhat liberated.

Six of Parrish's heroines are of this new breed, Marie Gessler (The Mystery of the Silver Dagger), Stella Donovan (The Strange Case of Cavendish), Helen Probyn (The Air Pilot), Vera Carrington (Contraband), Natalie Coolidge (The Case and the Girl) and Deborah Meredith (Gift of the Desert). Probyn and Donovan are newspaper reporters who have worked their way into the essentially man's world of 1913. Neither is basically unscrupulous, but either will tell "white lies" or eavesdrop in order to get a good story and beat others in the competition.

Stella Donovan is particularly crafty as she eavesdrops and follows clues in order to solve the supposed murder of Frederick Cavendish (Strange Case of Cavendish). Helen Probyn (The Air Pilot) feigns a fainting spell due to hunger in order to interview Philip



Dessaud. She makes up a story that elicits Dessaud's sympathy so that he will allow her to accompany him as he tours to demonstrate the monoplane. For her part, Helen Probyn proves to be courageous and resourceful in helping Dessaud track down the would-be saboteurs of his monoplane. Then she assists him in tying up the villains.

Marie Gessler works as a secretary for a government official who must keep a low profile in his secret service work. Early in The Mystery of the Silver Dagger, Marie becomes involved in undercover operations and at one point the hero, Philip Severn, thinks Marie herself has been involved in the murder of a foreign agent. Marie is as courageous as Helen Probyn and Stella Donovan, perhaps more so as her dealings with agents of foreign governments and other scoundrels are much more dangerous.

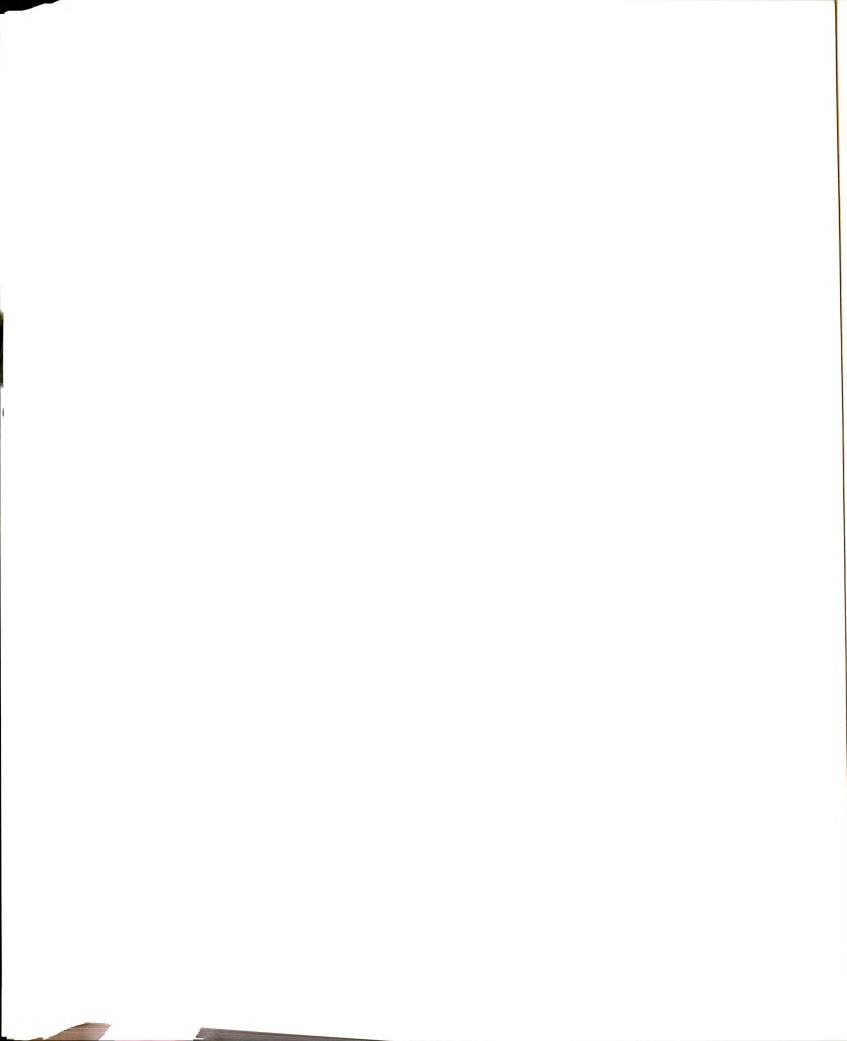
Both Vera Carrington (Contraband) and Natalie Coolidge (The Case and the Girl) had danger thrust upon them because of their wealth. Natalie's uncle tries to discredit Natalie by letting everyone believe she is going crazy, and later plans to have her killed. Natalie realizes that someone is out to murder her and realizing that she cannot take her opponents alone, she employs Matt West to help her.

Vera is on board her father's yacht and due to a collision with another vessel she is forced to assume, for a time, the duties of mate aboard the lifeboat in which she, the hero, and the villain escape the sinking yacht. Her courage is tested many times during the story where she proves to be as strong in a crisis as the other courageous heroines of the turn of the century stories Parrish wrote.

Deborah Meredith perhaps is the heroine who is tested more consistently than the other heroines of Parrish's tales. We learn by flashback of Deborah's war duty as a nurse in France during World War I. Deborah relives the chaos, the slaughter, the horror and the nightmare of the war in dreams after she returns to America. She seeks the calm and the solace of the Arizona desert but finds peace short-lived as the villainous stepson of her invalid employer reappears to claim the estate from his helpless stepmother.

Thus, Deborah finds herself ensnared once again in circumstances over which she has almost no control, but her courage surfaces as she realizes her obligation to her invalid charge as well as to herself. She confronts the villain, Bob Meagher, declaring she will die by her own hand before he will ever touch her even though they are married. Her strength and courage are tested further as she faces the dilemma of whether to remain at the ranch because of her invalid charge or to escape at night into the vast desert with which she is hardly familiar in order to get help. Her decision to go for help with all the attending dangers she is likely to encounter places Deborah in further peril, even after she meets the hero, Dan Kelleen.

Even though Parrish apparently liberated his heroines in the six special cases as he sets these six stories within the very early 20th century, all of his ladies seem to be almost relieved when their periods of liberation are over. Stella gives up her job as a newspaper reporter to marry the hero and so does Helen Probyn. Marie Gessler will return to her secretarial duties if she does not become more involved with the hero. Vera Carrington marries the hero and



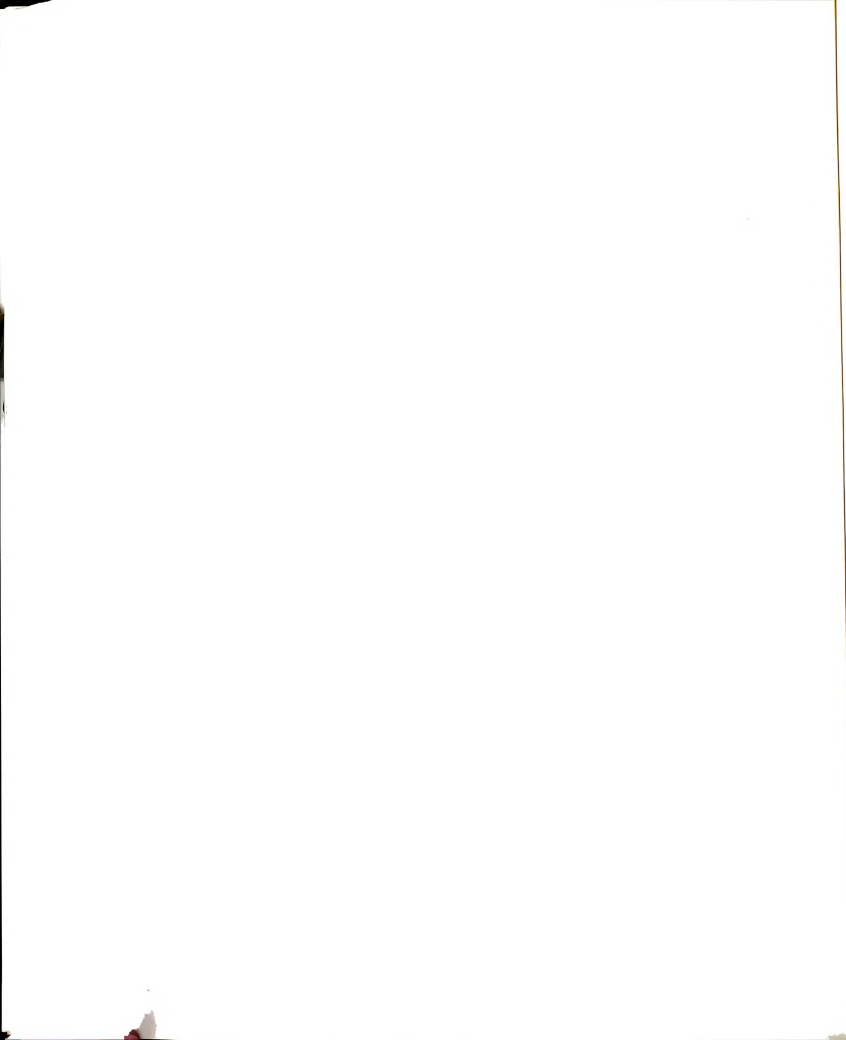
goes to sea with him. Deborah Meredith marries the hero also and is glad to get away from being on her own. The only one of the six, Natalie Coolidge, apparently is not going to marry the hero. Instead she is beginning a new life, still as an heiress, with her newly-found twin sister. Thus, she, too, is dependent on someone once again.

Apparently Parrish felt that he had liberated his heroine enough in these six stories; now it was time to bring them back to the fold. Would too much liberation and evolution destroy the image that Parrish had so carefully constructed? Parrish evidently thought so.

Parrish's heroines at times appear to be ambiguous to be sure but still they are static characters as they are passive, aggressive, dependent, independent but always loyal, gentle, unless circumstances demand otherwise, loving, responsible, respectful, diligent and courageous. How can she have so many facets to her personality? Because Parrish wanted a lady for his heroine and so he created her the way he knew she had to be in order to fill her role adequately -- properly -- she is the proper lady for his hero, the latter-day knight. Pygmalion and his Galatea live!

Endnotes

- ¹Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land, p. 127.
- ²Randall Parrish, Beth Norvell, p. 302.
- ³Ibid., p. 303.
- ⁴Ibid., p. 320.
- ⁵Randall Parrish, Gift of the Desert, p. 7.
- ⁶Smith, p. 131.
- ⁷Randall Parrish, Keith of the Border, p. 117.
- ⁸Ibid.
- ⁹Randall Parrish, The Air Pilot, p. 316.
- ¹⁰Randall Parrish, Molly McDonald, p. 341.
- ¹¹Ibid.
- ¹²Randall Parrish, The Case and the Girl, p. 28.
- ¹³Randall Parrish, Contraband, p. 71.
- ¹⁴Richard Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition, p. 125.
- ¹⁵Randall Parrish, My Lady of the North, p. 39.
- ¹⁶Edward Wheeler, Bob Woolf, the Border Ruffian, p. 3.
- ¹⁷Randall Parrish, Love Under Fire, p. 398.
- ¹⁸Parrish, Gift of the Desert, p. 305.
- ¹⁹Smith, p. 127.
- ²⁰Ibid.
- ²¹Ibid., p. 128.
- ²²Carol Gay, "Zane Grey and the High School Student", English Journal, December 1981, p. 25.
- ²³Ibid., p. 26.



²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

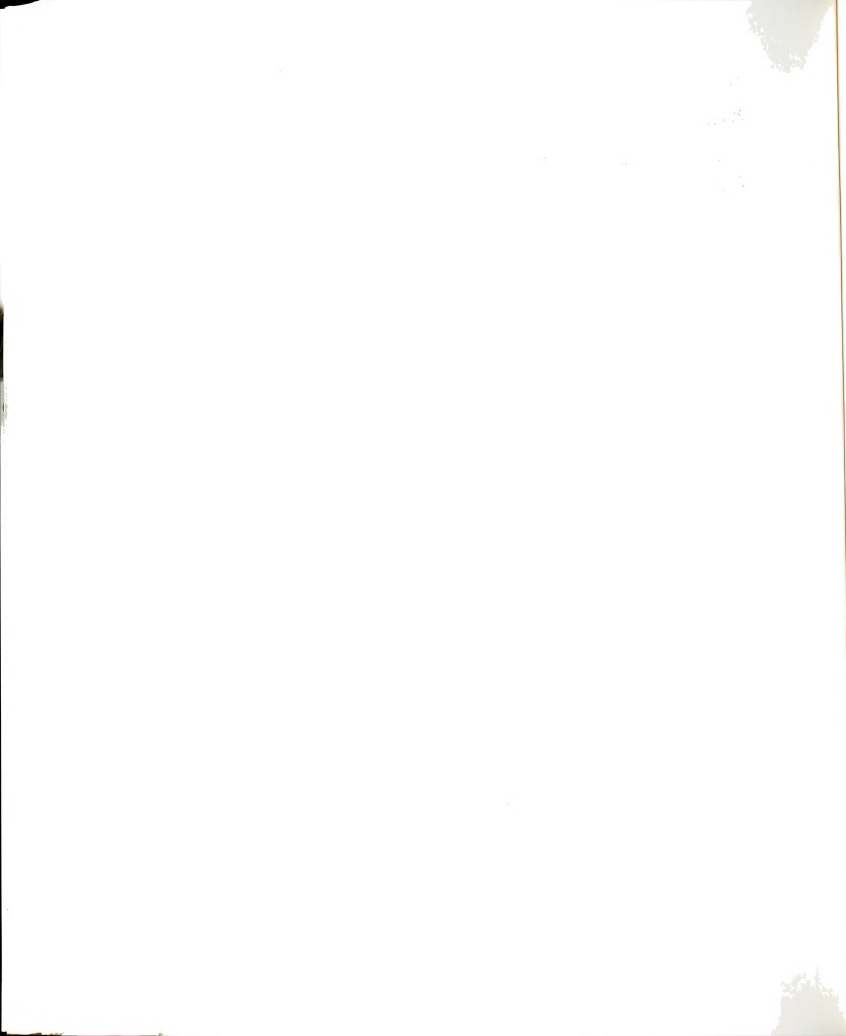
²⁶ Judith Funsten, The Women of the Leatherstocking Tales, p. 3.

²⁷ Randall Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 30.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 421.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 415.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 420.



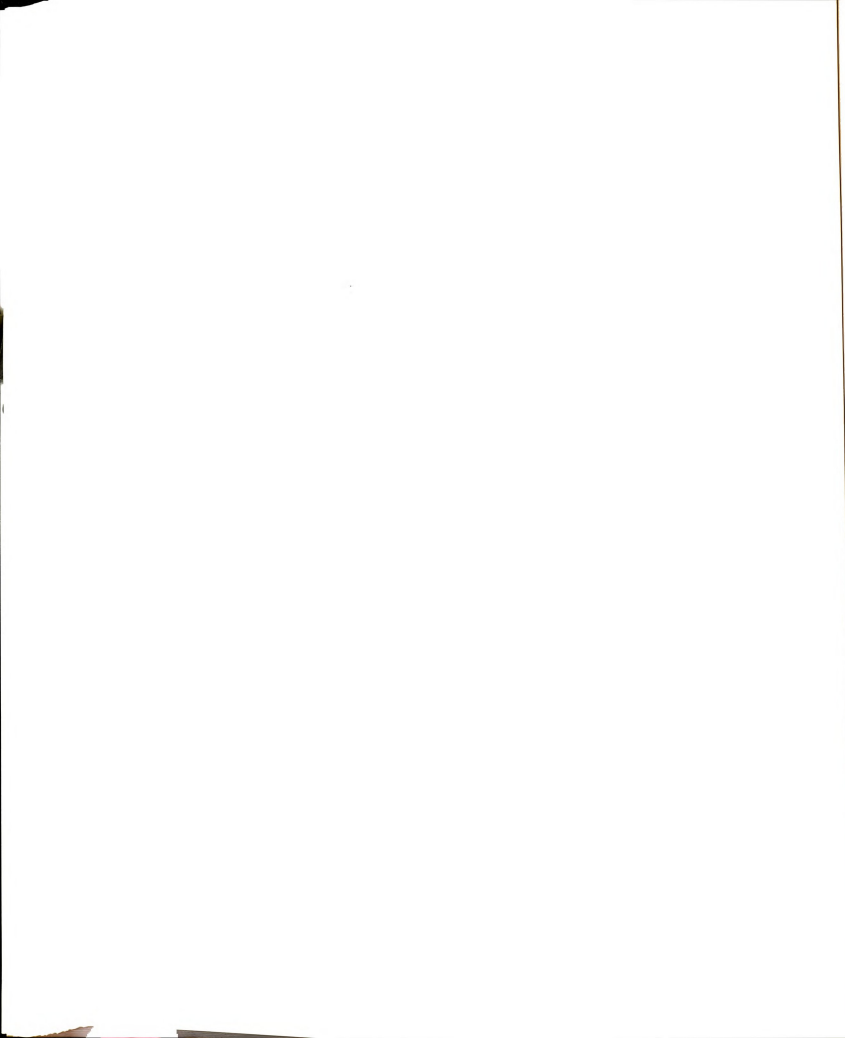
CHAPTER VII

Villains and Villainesses: The "Dark Side" Revealed

Villains in Parrish's tales are usually easy to identify. The physical appearance, especially the face, is a giveaway; the hero instantly knows the villain, male or female, for a fiend or scoundrel as the evil within each clearly shows without. Parrish's villain, like his hero, is a static character, a stereotype.

Of course, unlike the hero, the villain does not live by the chivalric code. Instead, he thrives by the amoral code common to all villains, which is modified only by necessity. His code is usually based first on financial gain and second on pleasure. Usually he will forfeit pleasure if otherwise it means losing out financially. In several novels the gain is political as spies and revolutionaries vie for control in assorted foreign countries. In only four stories is personal financial gain unimportant.

In the Civil War tales, My Lady of the South, Love Under Fire, and My Lady of the North, the villains are involved in the military. Confederate Army Captain Calvert wants to marry the heroine, Jean Denslow, but not for the wealth she could bring to the marriage. Calvert's really villainous acts are directed toward the hero who is a Yankee. In Love Under Fire, Charles Le Gaire is an evil man, in or out of uniform. He pillages during wartime, using his uniform as a disguise. He is cruel, especially to blacks, as he tries to hid his secret that he fathered a child by a slave girl and then worked her

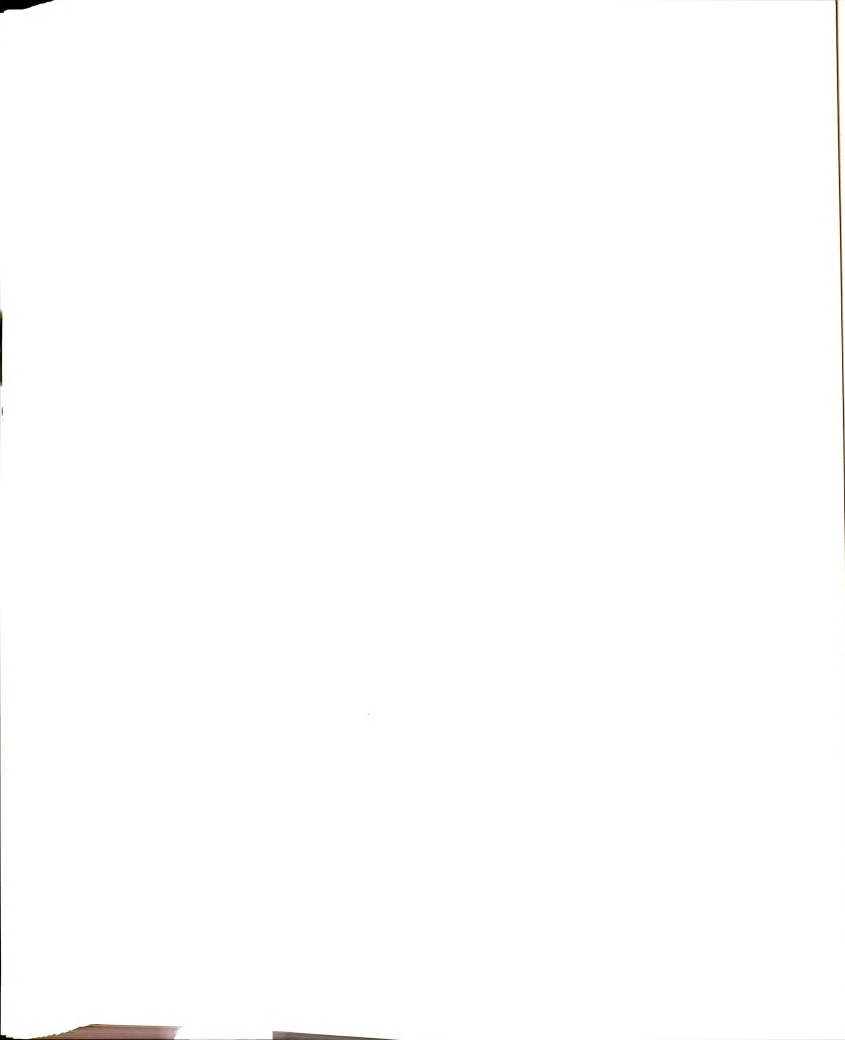


to death in the fields after tiring of her. In My Lady of the North Frank Brennan appears to be a villain as he behaves in a hostile manner toward the hero as Brennan is a Confederate as well as competition for Edith's affections.

In true villainous tradition, all three men, Calvert, Le Gaire, and Brennan attempt to thwart a union between the hero and the heroine. In addition, their actions in military guise also classify them as villains in the eyes of the heroes at least, as the heroes are respectful of the military. Le Gaire is exceptional in that he uses his military status to justify his pillaging for personal gain and in turn brings dishonor to the Army he has sworn to bring honor.

Often the villain is knowledgeable concerning the civil law; therefore, he knows just how far he can go legally. For instance, Patrick Enright, The Strange Case of Cavendish, is a lawyer who makes the law work for him. He is readily available when Frederick Cavendish needs his will rewritten in order to disinherit his no-good nephew. Crafty Enright also contrives to gain more for himself and he involves the nephew after the supposed murder of Uncle Fred when he lets the nephew, John, know about the will before letting anyone else know. Either way Enright benefits as he will settle the estate for a very large fee no matter who inherits, John or charities.

Each of Parrish's villains, with the exception of Brennan and perhaps, Calvert, is just as evil at the first encounter with him as he is at the final encounter. He is the essence of moral decay, totally rotten, but he has no desire to be otherwise as his code does not demand goodness.

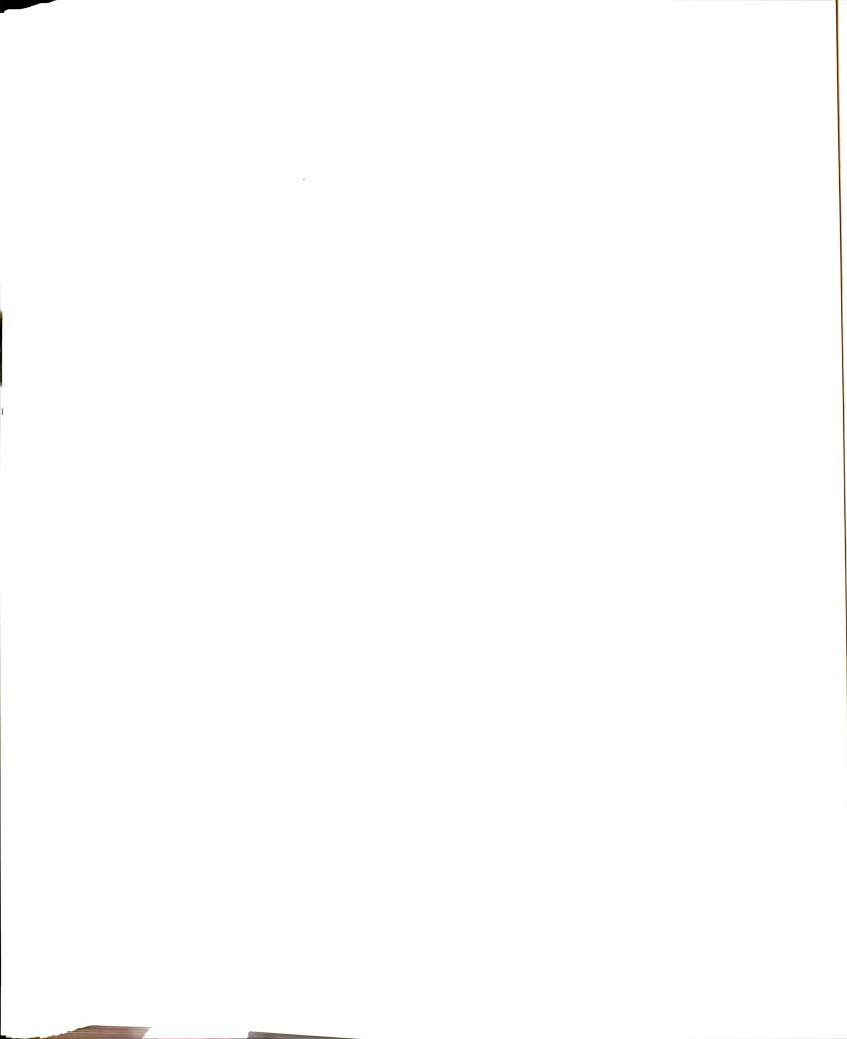


Parrish's villains range from young to old although the villain is never as young in Parrish's tales as are the heroes. Perhaps it takes a bit longer to develop an evil nature. For example, Patrick Enright, the crooked lawyer (The Strange Case of Cavendish) is described as

a heavy-set man with a loud voice and given to wearing expensive clothes ... suave and apparently young except for growing baldness.¹

Another young villain is Eugene Le Fevre alias DuPont (Molly McDonald). LeFevre had been a classmate of the hero, Brick Hamlin, at West Point.

Occasionally one of the villain's evil henchmen will be quite young. In Gift of the Desert, one of Bob Meager's cohorts is Pedro, who is described as "an Indian, a mere boy but with a cruel mouth, and face hideous from pockmarks."² Parrish makes use of this cliché, "cruel mouth" or a modification of it in a number of his stories. For example, Cassion, the villain in Beyond the Frontier, is described similarly -- "the thin line of his cruel lips."³ The same "cruel mouth" is used also to describe the fiendish half-breed messenger who accompanies the hero, Coubert, on his mission to Chief Pontiac (A Sword of the Old Frontier).⁴ A modification of this cliché occurs in Prisoners of Chance when the hero, Benteen, describes the Natchez Indians with "the fierce, cruel faces glaring ... eye to eye."⁵ A bit later Benteen remarks of Naladi, the villainess' face as "a face fair enough, yet not devoid of cruelty."⁶ Parrish apparently determined that "cruel" was one of the best words that could be used to describe villainous appearance as "cruel" occurs time after time in his descriptions of the villains and villainesses.



In Gordon Craig there are several villains; the first one to appear is P. B. Neale, a lawyer. Craig's observations were:

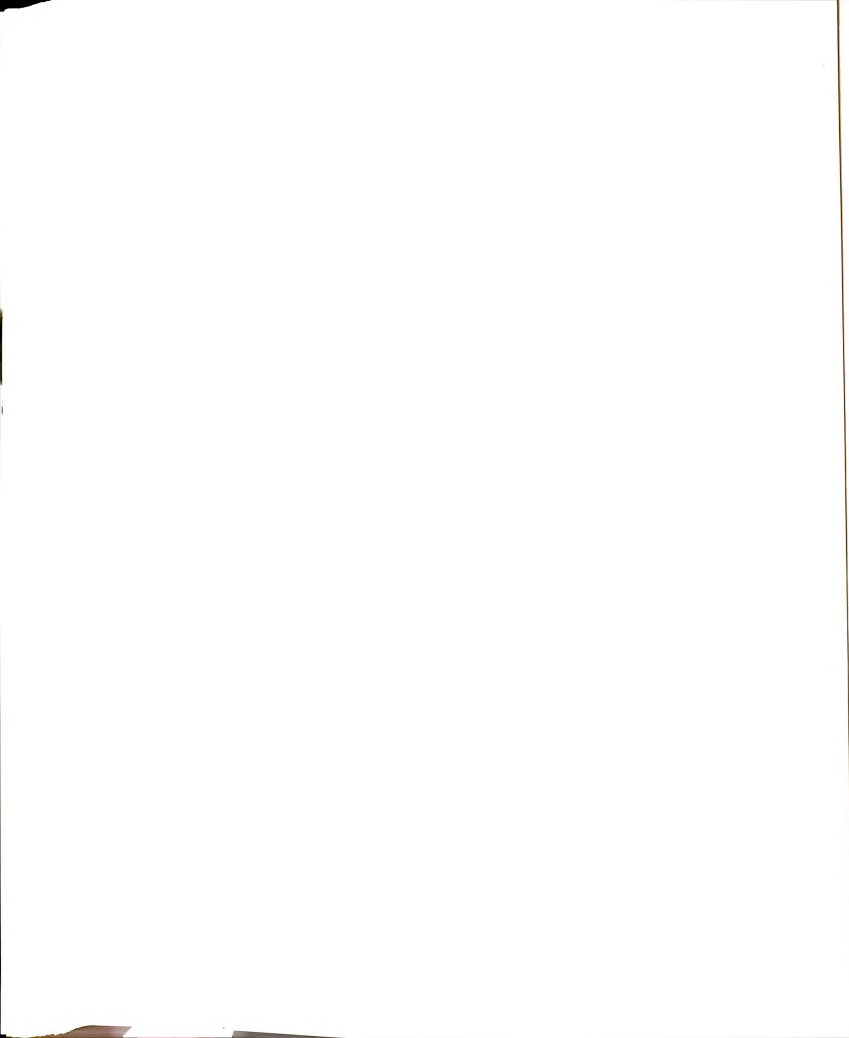
He was forty or forty-five, heavily built, with a rather pasty-white face, a large nose, eyes unusually deep set, and a closely-clipped mustache beginning to gray. His dress was correct to a button, and there was a pleasant look to the mouth which served to mitigate the otherwise hard expression of countenance ... he looked me fairly in the eyes.⁷

Craig at first suspects Neale is a railroad policeman, but soon learns he is crook when he -- Craig -- becomes involved in a scheme to settle an inheritance. Craig meets Neale's partner, Vail; he too has a villainous appearance:

I could not guess his age. His was one of those old-young faces, deeply lined, smooth-shaven, the hair clipped short, the flesh ashen-gray, the lips a mere straight slit, yielding a merciless expression, but the eyes, surveying me coldly, were the noticeable feature. They looked to be black, not large, but deep set, and with a most peculiar gleam, almost that of insanity, in their intensity ... he was tall and a bit angular, his hand, holding a cigar, evidencing unusual strength.⁸

The central villain of the tale is Charles Henley, the half-Negro illegitimate son of the late judge whose fortune is being sought by his heirs. His appearance is sinister. "His skin was olive-hued, and his teeth gleamed white in an effort to smile. I could not guess at his nationality, but felt an instinctive dislike to him."⁹

Craig had seen Henley briefly on another occasion. He thought then about his sneering smile, his curling lips, his very dark hair which was inclined to curl, his rather long face, his small mustache with waxed ends, his black, sparkling eyes and his long, shapely hands.¹⁰



There is yet another scoundrel in this particular tale, Coombs, the overseer at the plantation.

He was a big loose-jointed man, having enormous shoulders, his face hidden by a heavy mustache ... he appeared a typical rough, wearing big boots, with an ugly-looking Colt in a belt holster.¹¹

Coombs hopes to scare Craig away from the plantation, thereby leaving the way clear for Charles Henley to inherit, illegally of course.

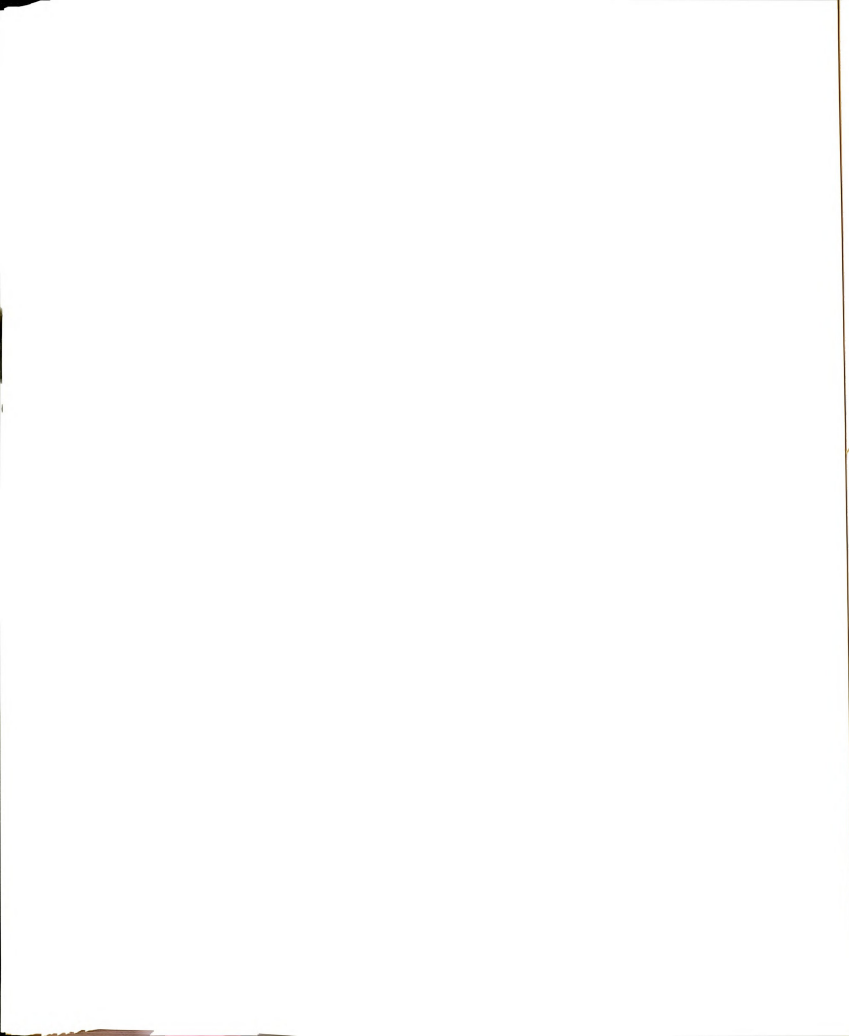
Parrish uses the crooked lawyer as a villain in another tale, The Strange Case of Cavendish. Patrick Enright is described as:

a heavy-set man with a loud voice and given to wearing expensive clothes ... he was suave and apparently young except for growing baldness.¹²

Another would-be villain associated with the law is Judge Cornelius Garrity (Gift of the Desert). What a vivid description of a perfectly horrid creature the heroine gives as she encounters the Judge for the first time:

She never before had seen a countenance more repulsive or so deeply marked by dissipation ... the sudden stare of those pig eyes and the bestial grin of the thick lips.¹³

Later Deborah notices his horrid, stubby fingers as he looks over the marriage license. Since Garrity lacks the necessary energy to be the chief instigator of any villainous plot, he associates himself with Meager, a stronger character. He usually carries a gun to give himself courage. According to the hero, Garrity could be "treacherous, unscrupulous, miserly even in crime, capable of any act to assume his gain."¹⁴ Later on the hero apprehends Garrity and declares that it is about time as,



Garrity has been the evil genius of this border for the last ten years. There is no crime he hasn't had a finger in. But no one could catch him redhanded.¹⁵

Garrity's base nature is pictured vividly when he views the wealth secreted away in the Alvarez mine:

... his eyes blazing with sudden, uncontrollable madness, he lost all fear -- with a mad cry he gathered up into his arms all that he could grasp -- golden crucifix, chaliced goblet, a great silver link glittering with pearls -- (he) laughed like a fiend as he hugged them close, then staggered on in wild ecstasy, a string of oaths breaking from his lips.¹⁶

Yet another greedy sort, Cole, a sailor, (The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel) responds similarly to the discovery of treasure. Even as the ice crushed vessel is going down, Cole's lust overcomes him as the hero realizes when he hears "the muffled sounds of blows between decks that the fellow had actually gone back into that icy hold to dig for gold."¹⁷ Cole differs considerably from Garrity, however, since he had not been previously the evil genius that characterized Garrity; Cole was merely greedy, not so malevolent as Parrish's major villains.

One wonders why Parrish chose to portray his villains so that they take on an "almost comic appearance, as they are so obvious in their wickedness."¹⁸ It is likely that Parrish needed a strong opponent to serve as a foil to the strong hero figures in his novels.

In addition, one needs to consider the period in which Parrish wrote. In the first two decades of the twentieth century it was still possible -- even necessary -- to sell such novels with all the melodramatic overtones which had been so popular in the previous century. Also Parrish may have wanted to confirm for his readers the

belief that wickedness often shows outwardly as such cannot be disguised.

Parrish frequently uses stereotypes of various ethnic groups to serve as his villains. Jews are a favorite target. In Don MacGrath one such vicious personality is a jeweler, Cohen, to whom Dean, Don's friend, sells a pearl; the Jew's greed surfaces instantly at the sight of the pearl:

That individual had not yet been to breakfast -- but he was ready to talk business ... his sleepy eyes lighted up as he saw the pearl ... He looked up shrewdly ... eager for a bargain ... The Jew's cold blue eyes gleamed.¹⁹

Later in the story when Cohen discovers that Don is the long lost son of a wealthy couple, he tries to collect a reward from them and not share it with his supposed partner, Tom MacGrath, who had stolen Don as a baby.

Similar foreign elements appear also in The Mystery of the Silver Dagger, which involves conspirators in Chile. As revolutionaries, they try to overthrow the existing government using American made weapons, money and help from subversives both in America and European countries. The most sinister of the group are Ivan Waldron, a Jew, a Russian and a Bolshevik, and Gaspar Wine, a cohort of Waldron's. Waldron is described as "a damned Russian Jew who would double-cross his best friend."²⁰

His appearance was too emphatically that of the Russian Jew of a certain type to enable him to conceal his birthright ... I had a glimpse of a beaked nose and a sallow, dull complexion, which seemed to blend naturally into a scraggling beard of no perceptible color. His hair though was iron-gray, apparently uncut for weeks, and thrust back from an unusually high forehead so as to give the man a ruffled unkempt appearance far from pleasing. He was big all over, strangely burly for a Jew, with

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broad shoulders and large hands, thickly covered with hair.²¹

A bit later the hero remarks on Waldron's "brute strength and ferocity" as they fight.²²

In The Air Pilot Parrish features villains named Brandt, Franzen, Eisenbarth, Schmitt and Swigert who just prior to World War I seek to destroy the fabulous monoplane belonging to Philip Dessaud. Schmitt and Brandt have shady pasts; Brandt was with the German Secret Service. His associate, Baron von Franzen, is also a spy. At one point in the story the description of Schmitt and the others as they dine in a restaurant at first does not indicate that they are villains, but merely Germans, as evinced by their accents and broken English. Their evil surfaces a bit later when they fail to convince Dessaud to sell his monoplane to them. During a fight Dessaud comments on one of the group, Franzen, whose malicious grin, his insane cunning, brought on by drink, and his ugly eyes all symbolize his evil nature. These German villains are typical of the strong anti-German feelings so prevalent prior to World War I and although America did not become involved in the war until 1917, hatred for things German was already appearing in popular fiction.

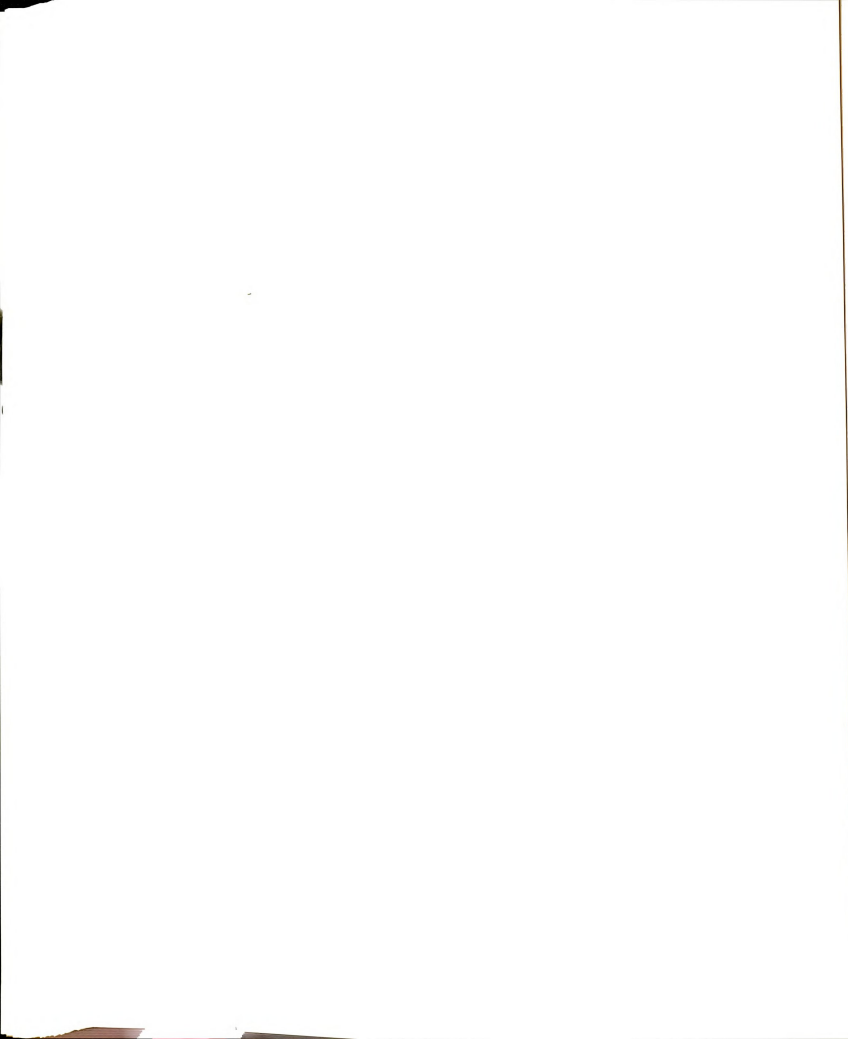
It is safe to assume that as a journalist Parrish was concerned with the emergence of revolution throughout the world, especially in the Western Hemisphere circa World War I as he used the theme of the revolution in a number of his novels. The Mystery of the Silver Dagger, Contraband, The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel, and The Air Pilot all address this important issue. In Parrish's view, any movement that is radical or revolutionary or anti-American must at

least be thwarted, but preferably wiped out. Parrish's stand is made known to the reader through his characters, especially his heroes.

Wine's main concern was "the establishment of world republic -- the downfall of all oppression. Chile came first, for it seemed ripe for the experiment."²³ His villainy comes as he pursues his dream. He allies himself with Waldron as they strive to overthrow various current governments. Finally the truth surfaces as Wine and Waldron squabble over the money that Alva, the "representative" in New York brings to Wine to further the revolution. Waldron accuses Wine of trying to keep the money for himself; he yells at Wine:

Damn it -- Part o' this boodle's mine, ain't it?
... I'll shake the gizzard out of you, you little
sneak, if you try any trick on me.²⁴

Parrish also uses Latin-Americans as villains in many of his tales. Mendez is a Chilean who is in league with Waldron and Wine (The Mystery of the Silver Dagger). Bob Meager surrounds himself with Mexicans, such as Juan Sanchez and Pedro (Gift of the Desert). In Wolves of the Sea there are three villains of Spanish-Mexican backgrounds, Estada, a ship captain, Sanchez (an alias in this case) and Manuel who works for Sanchez. In The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel the second mate, DeNova, also of Spanish origin, proves to be a villain as the hero learns too late when he sets out on a supposed voyage to Peru to aid in overthrowing the government. DeNova's real purpose, however, is hunting treasure. DeNova does decide at the end of the tale that survival is preferable to going down with the treasure so he listens to the hero when he insists on abandoning the doomed ice-locked vessel. In the same story there is another villainous crew member of Spanish heritage, known only as Sanchez,



who ran away from his native Chile, joined the party of the Sea Queen and later in the voyage murders the heroine's husband, Lord Darlington, in a dispute over the money Sanchez was supposed to get as a co-conspirator in the overthrow of the Peruvian government.

In The Strange Case of Cavendish there are several evil Mexicans -- such as Juan Cateras who makes unwanted overtures to the heroine, Stella. She describes his "leering, lustful smile"²⁵ -- "his eyes burning with lust gazing straight into her own."²⁶ Juan offers Stella escape and freedom if she will submit to him there in the mine. On other occasions Parrish features English, Irish, and Scottish villains. Eli Tuttle and his companion villain are English (The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel). Liverpool Red (Contraband) and George Harris (The Mystery of the Silver Dagger) are two other British who are equal as villainous co-conspirators. The main villain of Bob Hampton of Placer is Murphy, an Irishman, whom Bob seeks throughout the tale since Murphy had murdered a fellow officer and Bob was imprisoned for the crime.

Fergus McCann (Contraband) is of Scottish background and a millionaire; he wants to marry the heiress, Vera Carrington, the heroine, but she will have none of it. McCann connives anyway to force her into marriage, but the hero, Hollis, intervenes. When the yacht on which they are sailing is sabotaged, McCann shows what a scoundrel he is as he makes sure he gets into the lifeboat first. Later he eats most of what little food was brought onto the lifeboat and then turns hostile when the hero refuses to give him more rations.

Hollis does not expect much from McCann as he knows of McCann's checkered past. However, Hollis does not villify McCann to the extent that the heroine does. Vera declares,

He doesn't know what the word gentleman means. I fear him more than all the others ... if there is treachery behind this it will be the plan of Fergus McCann ... (he is) a coward, a liar -- vengeful, unforgiving -- Is there any act of crime beyond a character like that?²⁷

Hollis learns later that Vera is right as he witnesses more skullduggery by McCann; then Hollis admits that:

McCann is a villain by nature; he was born with criminal instinct ... the fellow is a coward back of all his bluff, and I do not think his criminal instincts are bloodthirsty. But he has drifted into a desperate situation, from which he must extricate himself at any cost ... to murder all on board to protect himself ... I do not believe he would hesitate at even that crime.²⁸

Two of Parrish's villains are French and one is Spanish. The Duke de Saule is French, and his horrid accomplice, a dwarf named Gospele, is Spanish (Shea of the Irish Brigade) while Eugene Le Fevre Du Pont (Molly McDonald) is French.

Although the Duke never appears until the next to the last chapter of Shea of the Irish Brigade, his villainy is referred to by the other characters in the story. Camille, the heroine, tells how he tried to woo her, but she rebuffed him. DeSaule is an intimate of the king, Louis XIX, known at court for "his profligacy, his wild excesses, his continual duels ... there would be nothing abhorrent in crime to such a man."²⁹ He is involved with thieves and mauraunders and with some diabolical political plot hatched during France's Seven Years War with Austria. DeSaule's description is limited to flashing eyes and curling lips.³⁰

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1642
1643

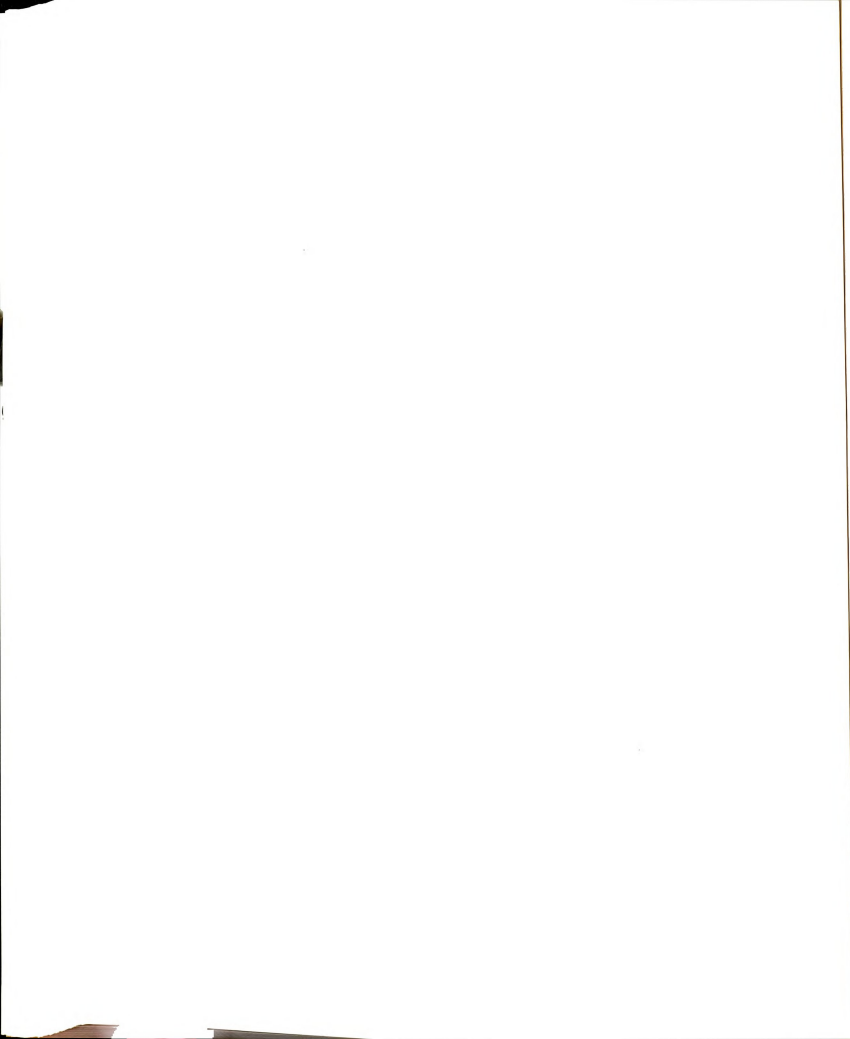
Gospele the dwarf is described in detail:

All Shea would see was a humped, distorted form, oddly attired in sheepskin, a great bushy mat of hair crowning the head, a long arm, all out of proportion, extended along the stone, and a hairy hand gripping the rock ... the figure was dwarfed, misshapen, even hideous in its deformity ... the face was the face of a man of sixty, distorted by ugliness and creased with age, a big face, sufficient for a giant, the mouth a wide gash, the eyes like wells, the nose flattened, as if by a blow ... a loathsome monster ... grotesque in his ugliness that had horrified Paris.³¹

Gospele's villainy is revealed via DeSaule, as he is DeSaule's henchman. Gospele cannot duel with swords as his master can, but he can aid his master in his evil by running errands, carrying messages and helping with stolen property. Gospele's horrible appearance is the most pronounced link he has to villainy -- he looks like a villain, therefore, in his case at least, appearances are not deceiving as he is a villain.

By using this strange and devious pair, the Duke de Saule and Gospele, Parrish arouses interest and curiosity in the reader. Parrish tells little about the Duke's physical appearance. What the Duke looks like is left mostly to the reader's imagination as is his behavior, described in rather general terms as "his profligacy, his wild excess, his continual duels."³² What exactly does the Duke do that is so terrible? The reader is never quite sure; he can only guess. On the other hand, Gospele's appearance is described in detail; so are his actions in the "deserted" castle where the Duke's gang hides out between robberies.

The reader gets the eerie feeling that the pair are one in their villainy; the Duke is the mastermind, the instigator of evil, whose



outward appearance we do not see; Gospele, however, is the doer, the performer of evil whose appearance is revealed in detail.

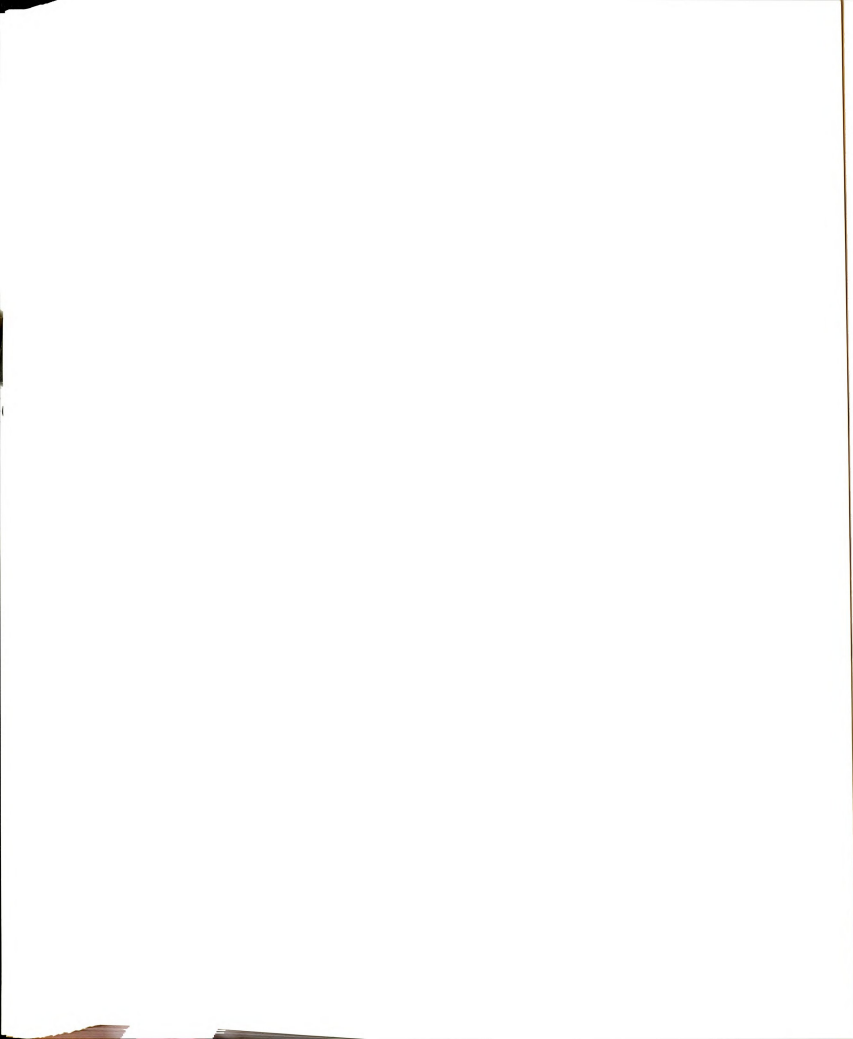
The other French villain is Eugene Le Fevre Du Pont. Like several other villains DuPont inherited wealth but squandered it. Therefore, he was forced to resort to various schemes; the final involvement in which Major McDonald is murdered eventually leads to DuPont's death as the Indians cheated by Dupont in the payroll scheme turned on him.

Black Peter and Old Anse (A Sword of the Old Frontier) are English. Coubert, the hero, distrusts Old Anse for his "sanctimonious, insinuating smile" and his "slimy touch, as if somewhere he hid the soul of a snake behind this outward semblance of piety ... his atmosphere was repulsive."³³

Black Peter, although half-English, is also half-Indian, thus he has a double possibility of villainy. Early in the story he and Coubert start to duel. Coubert describes him thus:

I think I never had before looked upon such a face as his, one so distorted by made passion, so crazed for revenge. The froth fairly oozed from his lips as though he were a rabid dog ... his great, gripping each other in impotent desire to break past my shining blade and close upon my throat.³⁴

Eight of Parrish's novels feature Indians as villains. Because the Indian is of another race, color, background, language, and religion (sometimes), he is often considered uncivilized by the white man and what a focal point of hatred he makes in Parrish's tales. Most Indians are described as vicious, wild, cunning, cruel, sneaky, devilish, devious and totally evil, therefore he cannot be trusted, usually; even half-breeds are suspect. Seldom can the white men in Parrish's novels find an Indian who can be respected even a little.



Since Parrish apparently relished writing detailed scenes of Indians preparing for the delight of torture and killing, he created some of the best descriptions of villains en masse. In A Sword of the Old Frontier, Coubert, for example, tells of being jabbed with sharpened sticks by the villainous red devils. They were scarcely controlled even by Pontiac, so crazed were they by their desire to destroy the white man.

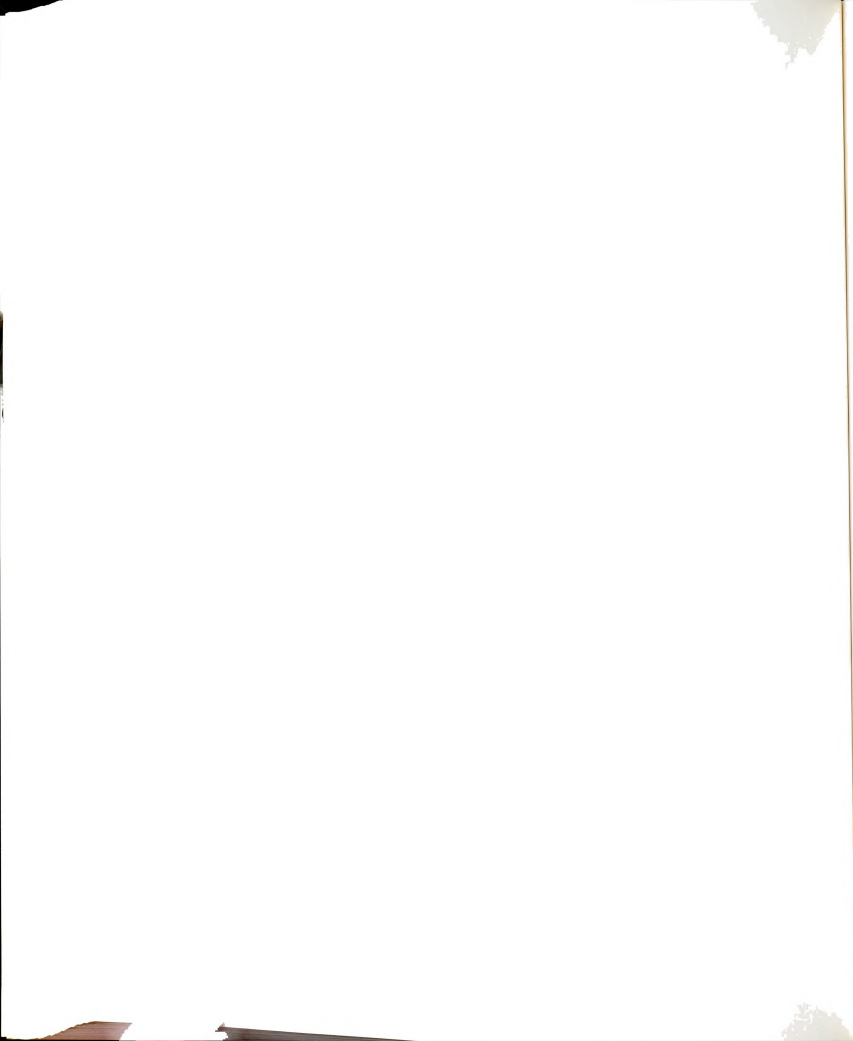
The Natchez Indians (Prisoners of Chance) best exemplify the fiends Parrish presents to his readers. Geoffrey Benteen, the hero, describes the strange devils as he observes one of them

I could not help observing again how widely the type differed from those Indian tribes with whom my wandering border life had rendered me familiar. Not only was this man of fairer, clearer complexion, but his cheekbones were not in the least prominent, his nose was wide at the base and somewhat flattened.³⁵

The hero is further intrigued by "the forehead that sloped sharply backward -- hair long and wavy and not coarse; the color ruddy brown."³⁶

After noting "the eyes which were very light-colored, bold, cruel, and crafty, plus the height with was greater than those of other Indians,"³⁷ Benteen determines that these particular Indians were probably descendants of the Ethiopian and the Mongolian making them a distinct race -- definitely distinct, he believes, from other North American Indians. They resemble more the Indians of Central and South America, but differ little from other American Indians when it comes to savagery; the torture of Father Andre is a good example as they burn his feet to blackened stumps.

The Indian villains of Parrish's tales often appear as a general group rather than as individuals. Perhaps this was done for dramatic



effect, but whatever the reason, the wild savages as a group or as individuals provide a terrifying element. Such an angry, wild, nearly uncontrollable mob is definitely frightening, even to the hero.

Not all evil doers are male in Parrish's stories; although he limits the number of villainesses to four in the 27 novels he wrote, these four are in most ways as evil as their male counterparts.

In The Strange Case of Cavendish, Celeste La Rue, born Sadie Copley, is evil because she is greedy. She wants to be an actress but is only a chorus girl; thus she sets out to snag herself a millionaire or at least an heir to millions like John Cavendish. When Stella Donovan, the heroine, meets Celeste, she is not surprised when Celeste shows no shame but instead is rather proud of the success she had achieved ensnaring Cavendish. Celeste's physical appearance confirms her villainous ways:

An aggressive blond with thin lips and a metallic voice whose name was synonymous with midnight escapades and flowing wine.³⁸

Frederick Cavendish's butler describes her as "a swell dresser -- one of those tall blondes with a reddish tinge in her hair."³⁹ Her hardness shows through, however, as her greedy nature propels her forward in her search for wealth.

She tells Stella that "all a good-looking girl needs is a chance before the public -- there's plenty of rich fools in the world yet."⁴⁰ Her special rich fool is John Cavendish. Celeste dogs his heels until he can stand it no more; Cavendish objects violently to Celeste's persistent demands for money -- lots of money. She threatens him -- "if I'd breathe a word of what I know in this town"⁴¹ in order to extract one final large sum before leaving for Colorado where she and

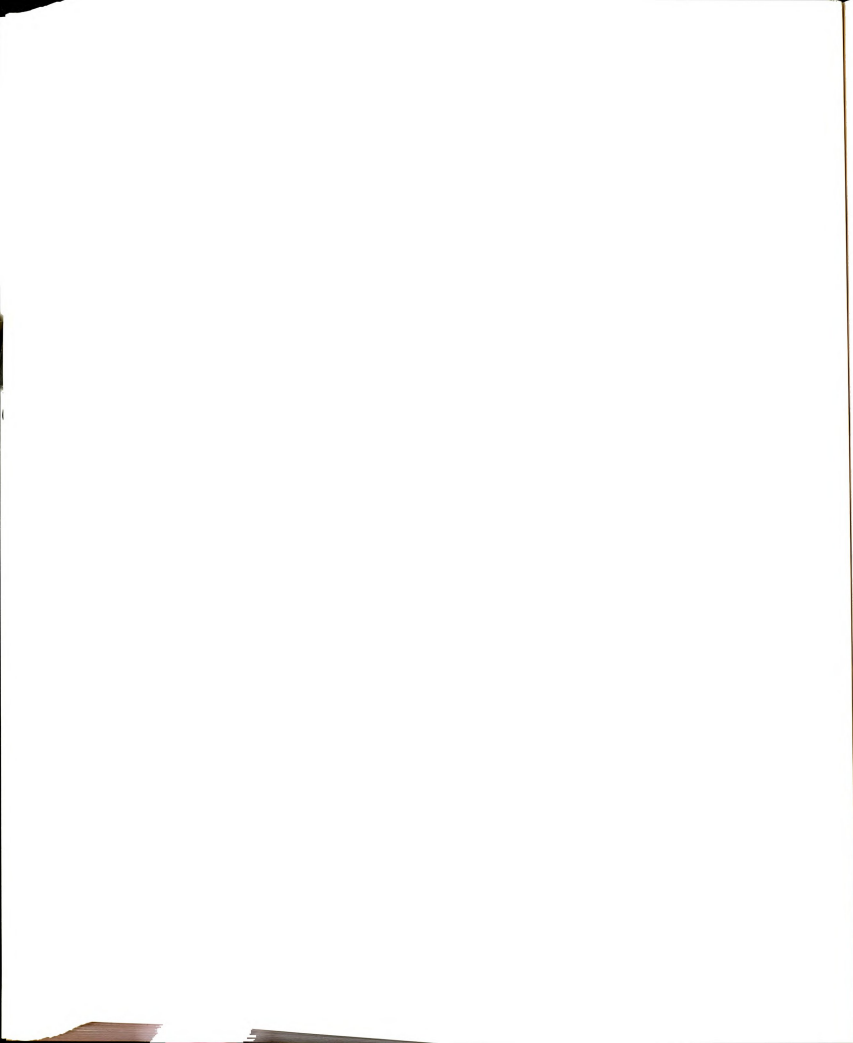
Enright hope to rig up an "accidental" death for Frederick Cavendish to clear the way for John Cavendish to inherit his Uncle Fred's millions. Then, of course, Celeste plans to marry John. Ironically, at the end of the tale, Celeste leaves the little Colorado town of Haskill as a married woman. The reader cannot be certain whether she is married to John Cavendish but only assumes it. The hotel owner who says Celeste left a note in her room stating that she is married to a man whose last name was a long one beginning with a C -- the hotel owner could not remember more. Thus the reader is left to wonder -- did Celeste have a change of heart? Did she marry John Cavendish hoping he would inherit even though Uncle Fred was not dead after all? The reader must arrive at an answer as Parrish does not give one.

A strange sort of villainess appears in Gordon Craig; she is Ol' Sallie, "a mulatto perhaps sixty years of age, her face, scarred by smallpox, and with strangely furtive eyes."⁴² She never speaks unless spoken to and then responds with "colorless monosyllabic answers"⁴³ which unnerve the heroine. Sallie seems to glide into a room, she is so quiet, which gives a further mystery to her character. At one point Gordon Craig asks her the whereabouts of the overseer at the plantation; and Sallie reveals that she practices voodoo and the overseer is scared of her. Then Craig is half afraid himself as he watches her and observes her "snaky eyes" and hears "her laugh, a weird, grating laugh."⁴⁴ Sallie never does anything openly that can be considered evil; instead she is constantly appearing and then quickly disappearing causing great fear in the heroine, Viola. Craig comments that even when he could not see or hear Sallie he "was

suspicious that she lingered not far from where we sat."⁴⁵ Toward the end of the tale the reader finds the truth about Ol' Sallie. She is the mother of Charles Henley, the illegitimate son of the late owner of the plantation, Judge Henley. Sallie's strange actions derived from greed; she wanted to prevent any legal heirs from inheriting the Judge's estate in order that her bastard son might inherit instead. Sallie never goes to the lengths that Celeste does, but in her own devious way she works to gain wealth for her son and herself. As in the case of Celeste, the reader never knows for certain what became of Sallie. The scene changes abruptly toward the end of the novel and final information on Sallie is never told. Perhaps she remained at the plantation, the only home she had ever known.

One of the villainesses whose outward beauty does not betray her inner ugliness is Vera Carson Le Fevre Du Pont (Molly McDonald). Mrs. DuPont does not have the sinister physical appearance of Ol' Sallie nor is she the brittle metallic sort like Celeste La Rue. According to the hero, Brick Hamlin, Vera Du Pont was and still is a beautiful and charming woman. In fact, Hamlin had once been engaged to this strikingly beautiful blonde prior to the Civil War, when he "thought her as good and true as she was charming."⁴⁶ This beautiful exterior, however, hides the evil within. Vera, totally self-centered, has always looked out for herself, promoted herself.

Unexpectedly Vera reappears at Fort Dodge where Brick is stationed. Brick realizes quickly that she has not changed; she is still looking out for herself. She jilted Brick in order to marry his wealthy classmate after she had discovered that Brick's family

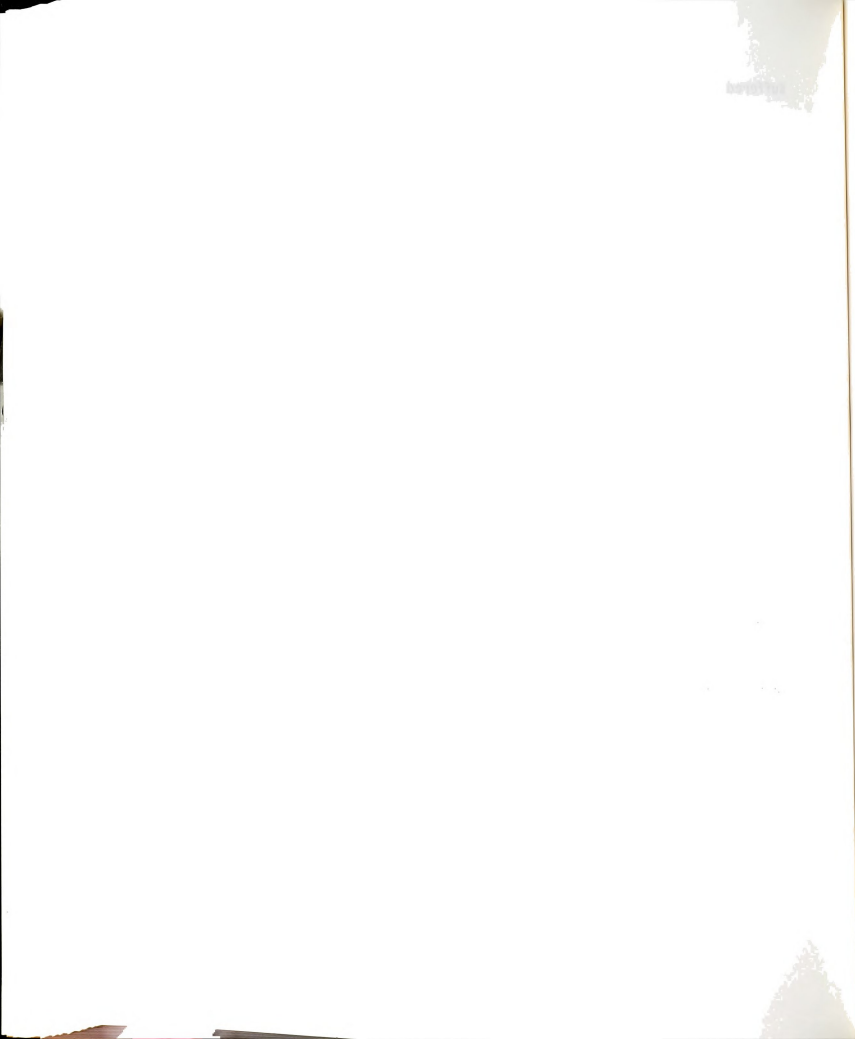


suffered ruin during the Civil War. When she appears at Fort Dodge Brick is suspicious of her motives for coming.

Eventually Brick and the heroine Molly find out that Vera's purpose is evil; she plans to extort money from Molly's father, the commander of the Fort. She lies to Brick about her purpose and compounds the lie by telling another which causes Brick anguish; she says that Molly is engaged to a Lieutenant Gaskins, knowing the information will cause Brick pain.

Vera's real motives are hidden but soon they surface as Vera and her husband, Eugene Le Fevre (now calling himself DuPont) coerce Molly's father into helping them steal the army payroll destined for Fort Dodge. Vera knows something about Molly's father -- which is never revealed in the tale, but it must have been something particularly important because Colonel McDonald agrees to the robbery.

Vera seems to be successful in her pursuit of wealth when she marries Le Fevre (alias DuPont) who has the wealth Brick lacked, but DuPont gambles and drinks away his money. Vera then decides to put into effect her scheme involving Colonel McDonald. Even though she brings along her shiftless husband as an accomplice to the robbery she realizes that she also needs someone from the military in case Colonel McDonald will not submit to her blackmail. This someone is a young lieutenant named Gaskins whom Vera seduces so that he will help carry out the robbery. Gaskins succumbs to Vera's charms and the robbery takes place. In the process Colonel McDonald is murdered, probably killed by DuPont or Gaskins. Toward the end of the story Vera Carson Le Fevre Du Pont runs off with Gaskins, leaving DuPont to



face the penalties of the robbery and the murder. In Vera's case, at least, crime pays.

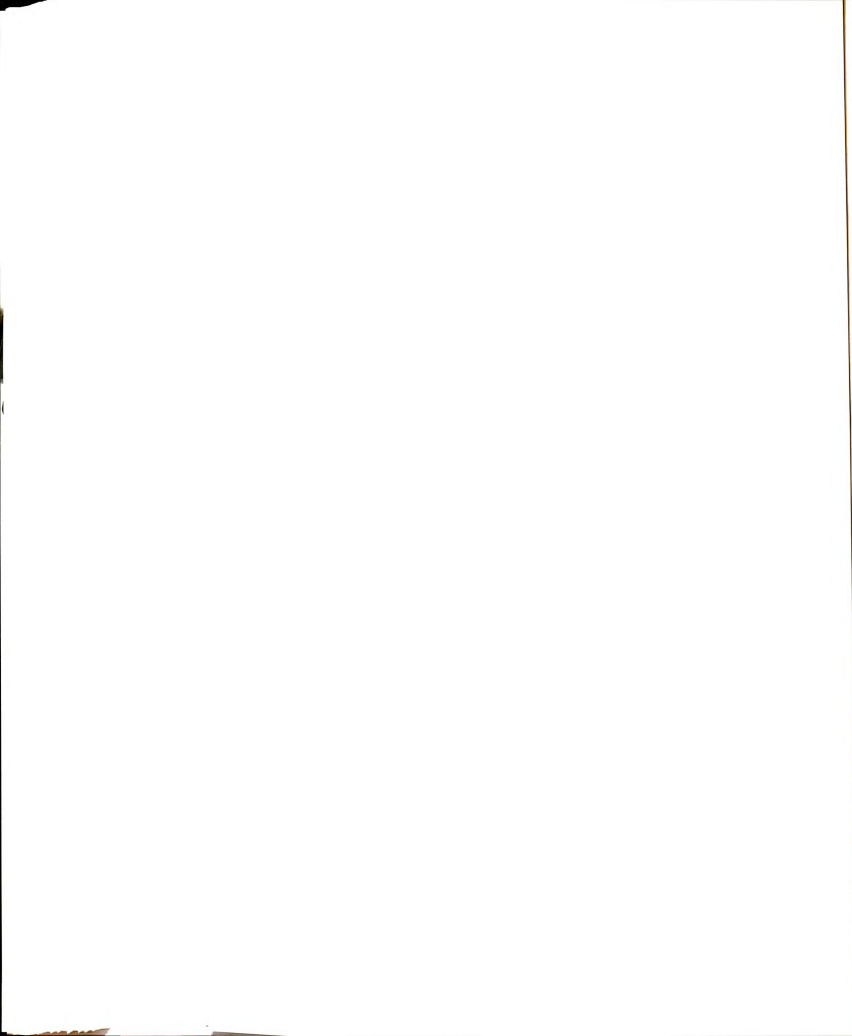
Parrish's most terrible, most electric, most colorful character is Naladi in Prisoners of Chance. Naladi is vicious, sensual, wild, greedy, power mad and blasphemous; this blasphemy is the most emphasized. Her striking physical appearance, coupled with her hypnotic charm present a vivid picture of this captivating sorceress; all of the males she encounters, with the exception of the perceptive hero Geoffrey Benteen, fall prey to her charms.

Her magnetism and hypnotic charm control most effectively the Natchez Indians whom she has convinced that she is a descendant of their earlier queens, the daughter of the Sun whom these Indians revere.

The hero describes her unusual and commanding physical appearance:

I shall forever retain the vivid picture imprinted on memory. Before us stood a tall, fair-skinned woman, having dignity of command in every movement, her face thin, strong dominant, with large, dark, passionate eyes, flashing in scornful beauty over the excited warriors at her feet. Pride, power, imperious will, a scarcely hidden tigerish cruelty, were in every line of her features, yet she remained strikingly handsome, with that rare beauty which drives men mad and laughs mockingly at its victims. She was robed completely in red, the brilliant color harmonizing strangely with her countenance, the single outer garment extending, devoid of ornament, from throat to heel, loosely gathered at the waist, and resembling in form and drapery ... of Roman togas ... her magnificent wealth of hair, of richest reddish gold, appeared to shimmer and glow in the sparkling of leaping flames as if she wore a tiara of rubies.⁴⁷

Quite evidently, this lady could command obedience by her looks alone but her voice completes the effect as Benteen, the hero, observes:



With quick, passionate speech she poured forth her purpose, and I saw the savage throng shrink before her, as if they knew and dreaded the outburst of her anger.⁴⁸

Even when the old war-chief summons his courage to face up to her and the throng then rallied around him against her, she again gains control:

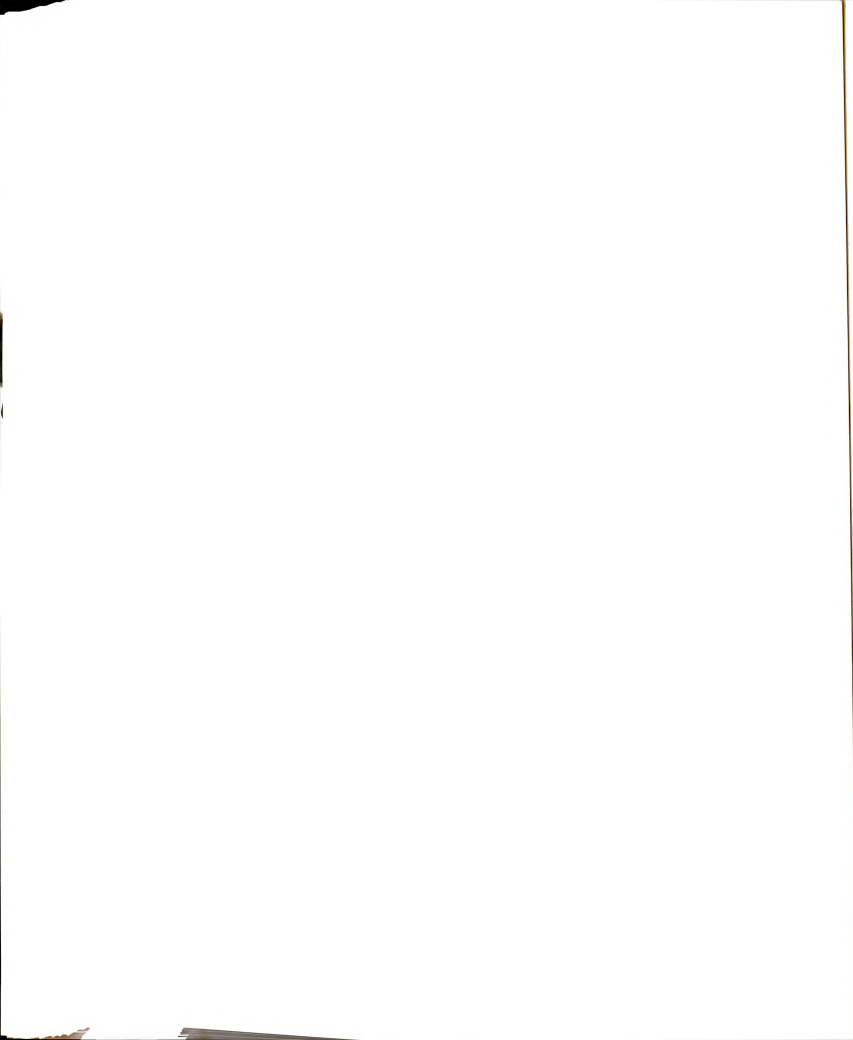
-- the lines of determination but deepened in her face, her lips curled in scorn, and she turned (her flashing eyes) from them --⁴⁹

A moment later Naladi turns to lash out at the hero and his associates; as she does, "her eyes glowed angrily, her face becoming cruelly hard."⁵⁰ Naladi does not intend to lose control over her subjects simply because outsiders have intruded in on her kingdom. Naladi tells the hero:

we believed you to be French, whom the children of the Sun God reason to hate (as) you have cost us the lives of many warriors⁵¹

Naladi realizes that she must accept the vote of the tribe in order to keep control and to put the hero and his associates to death by fire. At this point she acknowledges that "she is no angel, nor ambitious to become one."⁵² But then for some unexplained reason she declares that she will try to help the captives escape death at the stake, if the man called Puritan (from the hero's little group) will stand up beside her on a huge platform and be her partner in establishing control of her rebellious subjects who want to burn the intruders to death.

As a result Naladi regains complete control once again over her subjects with her magic tricks, using Puritan as her aide. When the hero tries to thank Naladi for saving the little group from the stake she says,

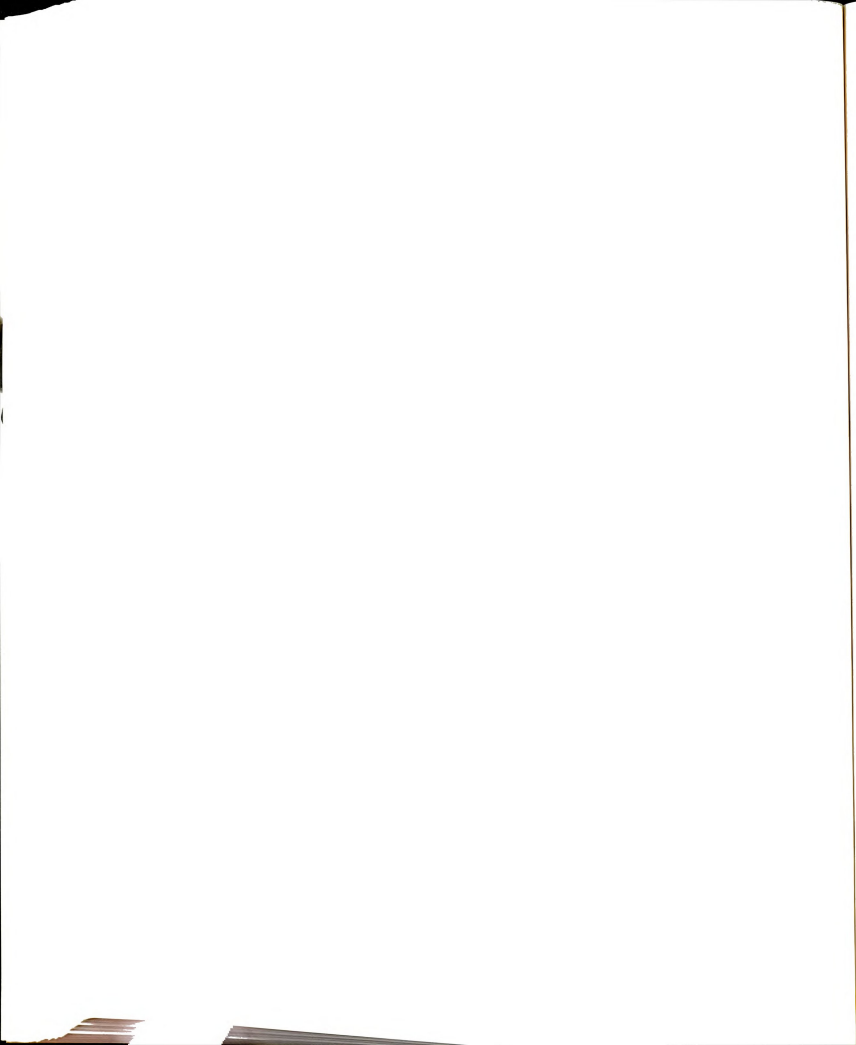


I told you before it was not from any desire to show mercy, but for a purpose of my own.⁵³

Shortly thereafter, Naladi selects the man, Puritan, to be her partner, and again her sinister character surfaces; "her eyes flashed in uncontrolled anger, her lips giving vent to a low, cruel laugh".⁵⁴ When Benteen questions Naladi about Eloise's whereabouts, Naladi erupts again with greater anger, Benteen comments further: "She was a tigress now, her eyes burning into mine with the fierceness of a wild animal scenting blood."⁵⁵

The extent of Naladi's depravity is revealed completely as it is in a chapter titled "The Tale of the Priest", in Prisoners of Chance. It is there that the reader learns that the priest, Father Andre Lafossier, some six years before had been intimately involved with Naladi. At that time he was a soldier, a dragoon in the Auvergne regiment stationed at Saint-Rienes, France. Lafossier met Marie Fousard (now Naladi) there. She was married to an army captain; she was young, beautiful "with clear cheeks, lips of the rose, and great trustful eyes."⁵⁶ Even then, however, Naladi (formerly Marie) had "that knowledge of the world and of the men which enables her to make me ... her helpless slave for evil."⁵⁷

The priest continues his tale to Benteen recounting how he was so blinded with love that he was "helpless to resist an evil I failed to perceive -- this devil incarnate."⁵⁸ Eventually Naladi (then Marie) convinces Lafossier that her husband abuses her, even displaying Lafossier a bruised shoulder to prove her "lie." Lafossier goes temporarily crazy and kills Naladi's husband. Immediately afterwards Naladi (Marie) "tears from her face the mask of innocence -- calls Lafossier a fool and boasts that she had merely used him for her own



vile purposes."⁵⁹ A short time later Lafossier learns that Marie marries the village prefect, then poisons him, and then flees with yet another soldier and the prefect's valuables. At this point Lafossier enters the priesthood to expiate his sins and of course never expects to see that female devil incarnate again.

When Lafossier does re-encounter Marie (Naladi) he reveals himself to her and begs her to repent. Even though Naladi is momentarily surprised and frightened she quickly regains control of herself. Her eyes blaze and she lashes out at Lafossier that she will never repent; in fact, she will burn him at the stake and "mock him to the last breath."⁶⁰

As one would anticipate, such a villainess as Naladi must die violently. She meets an appropriate end -- she is buried alive along with most of her followers as Puritan uproots a huge tree stump which in turn causes an avalanche of rock within the cave, the scene of Naladi's throne room. Apparently this demise was appropriate, as she is the only one of the villains, male or female, who is openly blasphemous, refuses to repent or to make her peace with God. Granted other villains meet

Although Parrish's villains and villainesses come in a variety of shapes and sizes, they share a common characteristic, evil. The villains of both sexes scoff at the idea of doing good or treating others with kindness; they know only love of self and advancement of self. Even among themselves they have no concern for one another; personal gain is foremost in the mind of each. Often the villains are allied simply because they hope to gain wealth; over and over in Parrish's novels villains join for profit motive, but each villain would switch alliances if more could be made by doing so. Self-aggrandizement is their code. Like the heroes, the villains, male or female, are also static

characters. They do not change, for of course if they did, the hero would have no one or no obstacle to overcome and therefore no purpose.

Parrish's villains, like those of his contemporaries, symbolize the reality of evil in this world and the dark side of humanity, wherein sin is magnified. Just as the hero would resist temptation the villain does not pretend to resist it; instead he succumbs readily. Parrish vividly depicts the selfishness of the villain in contrast with the selflessness of the hero; thus the reader is allowed to witness in his imagination the eternal struggle of good versus evil.

The struggle between good and evil usually ends with the villain getting his just deserts, his punishment merited. However, in three situations, this does not occur. Ol' Sallie (Gordon Craig) is apparently left at the plantation as the final scenes take place on board ship where the real villain, Charles Henley, Sallie's son, is apprehended and turned over to the police. Why isn't Sallie punished? The reader is not told. Perhaps Sallie's punishment comes when her bastard son fails to inherit.

Celeste La Rue and Patrick Enright in The Strange Case of Cavendish run away when they see that the "jig is up." Again, their only punishment is the loss of money they hoped to gain by illegal means.

Vera Du Pont (Molly McDonald) is another villainess who flees when faced with difficulties; however, this time she runs off with the army payroll she and her associates stole. This is the only time that Parrish allows a villain to get off "scot free;" certainly Vera was more evil

than many others in Parrish's tales, since she was an accomplice in both a murder and a robbery.

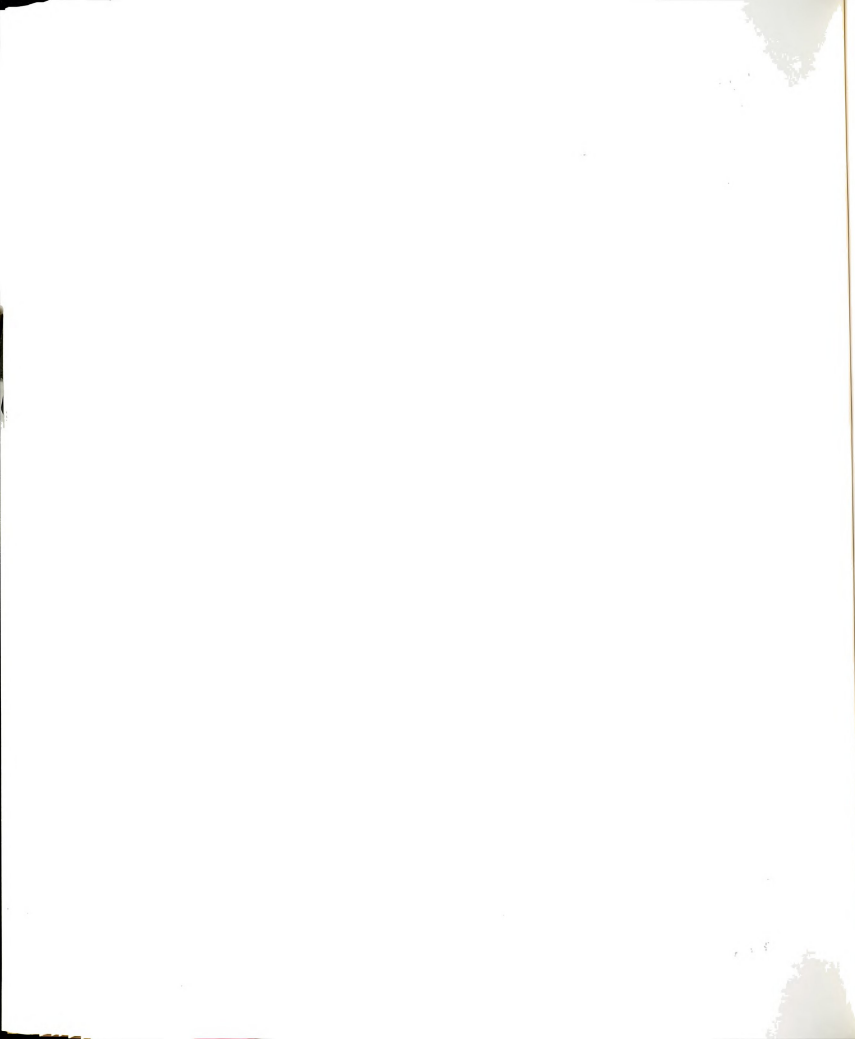
In the majority of the stories the villain pays for his crime, often with his life, sometimes with imprisonment -- and, of course, the hero is instrumental in bringing about the villain's demise or capture. However, the hero does not kill the villain himself, the villain's death is the result of a freak accident, the aftermath of a fight between the villain and the hero. For instance, Philip Severn (The Mystery of the Silver Dagger) has a fight with Gaspar Wine and Ivan Waldron; the fight ends as Wine falls out of the window and the sudden distraction allows Severn to knock out Waldron. In Gift of the Desert, the hero, Kelleen, has a fight with Bob Meager in a mine shaft. Kelleen manages to throw Meager off guard and Meager dies in a fall down into the shaft. Sometimes the fight between the hero and the villain ends as someone else appears on the scene and shoots the villain, sparing the hero the responsibility for his demise.

Endnotes

- ¹Randall Parrish, The Strange Case of Cavendish, p. 12.
- ²Randall Parrish, Gift of the Desert, p. 32.
- ³Randall Parrish, Beyond the Frontier, p. 15.
- ⁴Randall Parrish, A Sword of the Old Frontier, p. 72.
- ⁵Randall Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 229.
- ⁶*Ibid.*, p. 237.
- ⁷Randall Parrish, Gordon Craig, p. 9.
- ⁸*Ibid.*, p. 18.
- ⁹*Ibid.*, p. 209.
- ¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 131.
- ¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 103.
- ¹²Parrish, The Strange Case of Cavendish, p. 10.
- ¹³Parrish, Gift of the Desert, p. 49.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 275.
- ¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 278.
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 287.
- ¹⁷Randall Parrish, The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel, p. 349.
- ¹⁸Victor Howard, personal communication, February 1983.
- ¹⁹Randall Parrish, Don MacGrath, pp. 72-73.
- ²⁰Randall Parrish, The Mystery of the Silver Dagger, p. 85.
- ²¹*Ibid.*, p. 156.
- ²²*Ibid.*, p. 162.



- ²³Ibid., p. 244.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 256.
- ²⁵Parrish, The Strange Case of Cavendish, p. 211.
- ²⁶Ibid., p. 214.
- ²⁷Randall Parrish, Contraband, p. 267.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 299.
- ²⁹Randall Parrish, Shea of the Irish Brigade, p. 184.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 329.
- ³¹Ibid., pp. 170-171.
- ³²Ibid., p. 184.
- ³³Parrish, A Sword of the Old Frontier, p. 135.
- ³⁴Ibid., p. 80.
- ³⁵Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 295.
- ³⁶Ibid., p. 296.
- ³⁷Ibid., p. 297.
- ³⁸Parrish, The Strange Case of Cavendish, p. 10.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 20.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 119.
- ⁴¹Ibid., p. 40.
- ⁴²Parrish, Gordon Craig, p. 109.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 110.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 112.
- ⁴⁵Ibid., p. 149.
- ⁴⁶Randall Parrish, Molly McDonald, p. 209.
- ⁴⁷Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 260.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., p. 261.
- ⁴⁹Ibid.



⁵⁰Ibid., p. 262.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 263.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., p. 273.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 275.

⁵⁵Ibid.

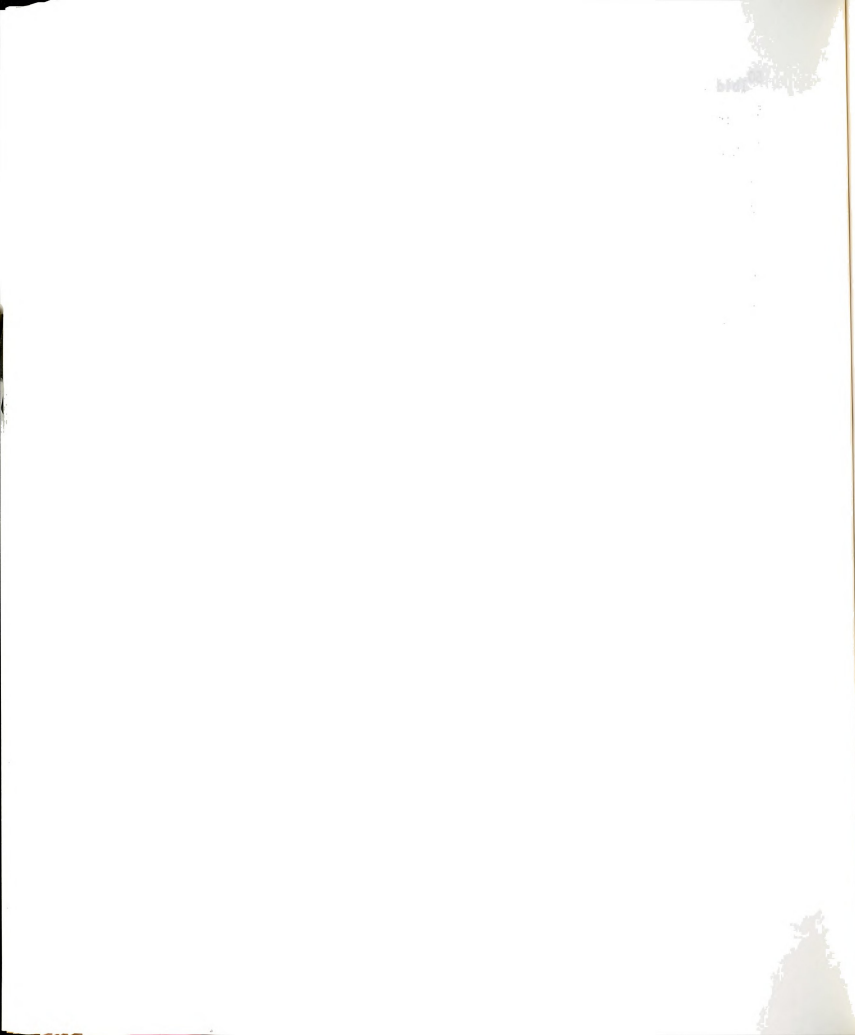
⁵⁶Ibid., p. 386.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 387.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 407.



CHAPTER VIII

Conclusion

Parrish continued to publish his fictional melodramas for 20 years; the sales were always healthy, as we have seen. And yet he does not survive as a figure of prominence, even to those interested in the history of American popular arts. His contemporary, Zane Grey, no more nor less a writer of quality perhaps, though most certainly more devoted to the western story, is very much in print. Tastes in literature rise and fall, change for better or for worse. It may be that Parrish's readers became satiated with his intense, flamboyant imagery, the convoluted plots, or his single-dimensioned characterizations. By way of summary and conclusion, we might further speculate on Parrish's work by reviewing, briefly, what his reader found there. It is not unusual to find advertised in the final pages of the popular novels of the time as many as 250 titles in a list from nearly as many authors. Randall Parrish is listed frequently, sometimes with as many as a dozen different titles.

The question of why Parrish's popularity waned is not one that can be answered simply; there are numerous answers, none of which can address the question completely.

Like most of the authors of his time Parrish revealed in his melodramatic tales his own opinions and prejudices regarding such issues as race, religion and duty to one's country. Parrish was highly racist, evident in the way he portrayed Jews, Indians and

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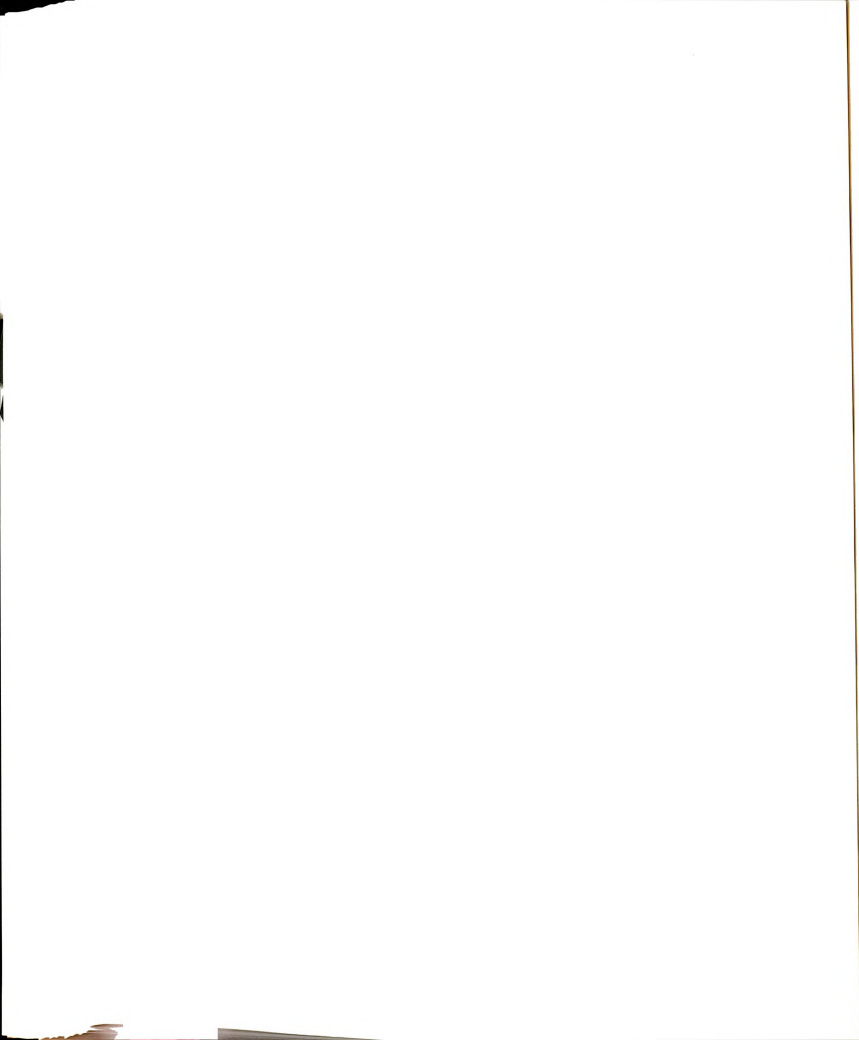
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others not of Anglo-Saxon heritage such as Mexicans, Poles and Germans. His bigoted, racist attitude toward blacks is evident also as he portrays blacks as unintelligent, at best fit for servant roles only. From a religious standpoint Parrish was a bit more circumspect, but even so his opinions emerge. Perhaps the best examples appeared in Prisoners of Chance as Parrish, through his characters, vilifies Catholic priests, then Protestants and finally the heathen, sun-worshipping Natchez Indians.

The heroes in Grey's and Parrish's stories were exemplary men who adhered to the traditional chivalric code, modified somewhat to fit conditions in the New World. It needs to be noted, however, that Parrish's Western heroes, in particular, lacked somehow the spirit of independence so typical, so representative of America, that characterized those of Zane Grey, Owen Wister, and others. Perhaps Parrish's Westerners lacked sufficient independence because most of them had ties with the military; in other words, the military was still in their blood and did afford each the element of independence necessary to be the free spirit that is equated with a real American. Perhaps this might be one reason Grey's novels sustained their popularity and Parrish's did not.

No single novels of Parrish's enjoyed the remarkable success of Grey's Riders of the Purple Sage, which sold one million copies in the first printing and later 800,000 in reprint. However, Parrish's stories sold well; for example, Keith of the Border was reprinted six times within five months, October, 1910 to February, 1911. Another popular title of Parrish's, My Lady of the North, a tale of the War Between the States, sold a total of 100,000 copies in a period of



eleven years. Between 1904-1915 nineteen titles had sold over three-quarters of a million copies.

Parrish wrote 29 books; seven novels about the West and one a history of the Great Plains. Grey, however, had 60 novels to his credit, most of them about the West. In addition, Parrish's writing of novels and histories was done in a period of two decades (1904-1923) while Grey wrote over a longer period, three decades (1904-1939). Also, Grey left several unpublished novels.

One wonders even more how Grey's stories have remained popular and Parrish's have not when one reads the commentary by two critics contemporary with Grey and Parrish. Burton Rascoe said of Grey:

It is difficult to imagine any writer having less merit in either style or substance than Grey and still maintaining an audience at all - he brought about the vicarious wish-fulfillment of millions of sedentary workers in the office warrens of cities and industrial towns.¹

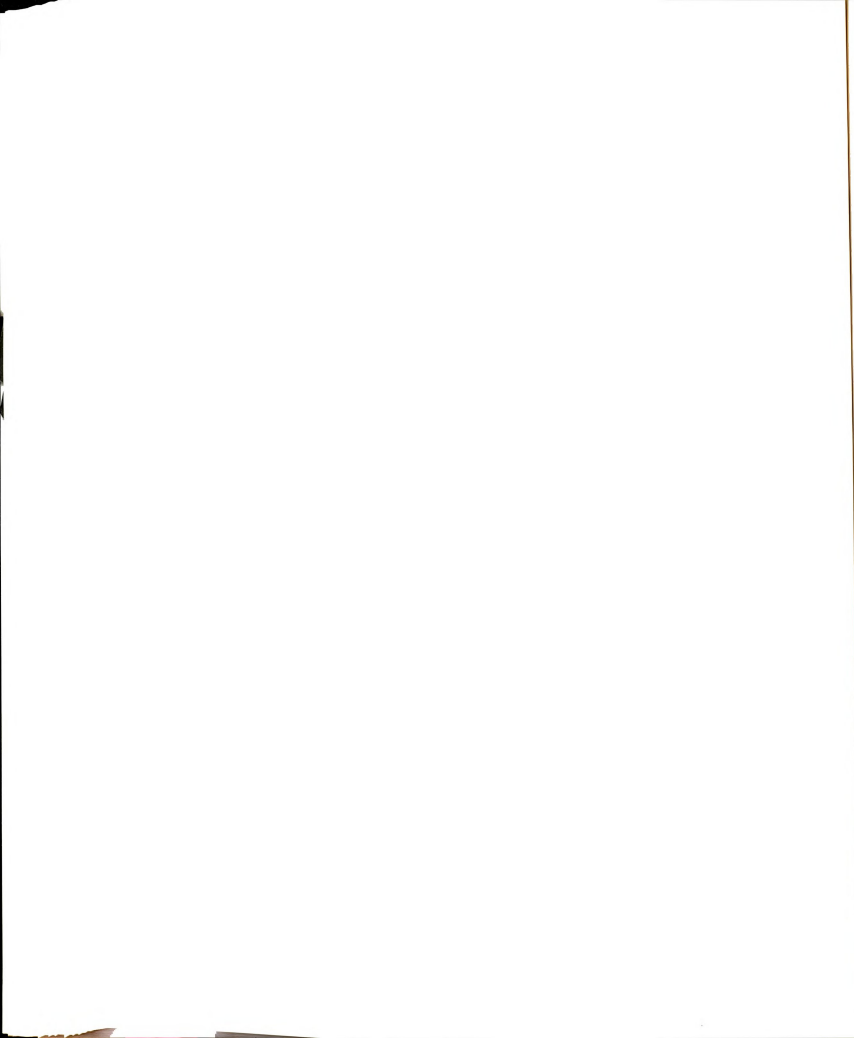
However, such a negative assessment obviously did not affect Grey's popularity as an author.

On the other hand, the laudatory statement by an anonymous critic of the Detroit Times regarding Parrish's literary ability can be found in the back of the 1909 publication of My Lady of the South; the critic states:

American literature owes much to Mr. Parrish, and he is increasing the debt still more with every volume. There is none other among the noteworthy writers of the day just like him, and very few in the notable army who have preceded him.²

Unfortunately, this most flattering assessment of Parrish did little to sustain his popularity.

Like Cooper, he filled his tales with vivid, colorful, detailed description. Three scenes stand out perhaps more clearly than others



in Parrish's tales: the view of Lake Michigan shoreline seen from the airplane piloted by Philip Dessaud (The Air Pilot), the scene within the cave altar room where Naladi held court (Prisoners of Chance), and the view of the desert at sunrise and sunset seen by Deborah Meredith (Gift of the Desert). The reader need not have seen these scenes himself as Parrish provides such splendid description that the reader's imagination is able to complete the picture.

One such example is when the reader views the scene with the hero from the plane as he flies over Lake Michigan (The Air Pilot):

It was a fairy picture of neither night nor day, full of spectral shadows, and the gleam of strange lights, blending into the ghastly gray of the dawning, with the somber waters dashing against the shore, and the earth a shapeless gloom, yet aglow with color...From the height we had now attained we could perceive a faint tinge of red far to the eastward, with purple streamers piercing the low-hanging mist which still obscured the horizon.³

The view is further intensified since the narrative is told in first person; therefore, the reader becomes part of the story too.

From Prisoners of Chance the description of the altar is described thus by the hero:

I lifted my body and glanced curiously around our prison house. In the centre was the blazing log, the sole bit of color my eyes could perceive. Kneeling upon either side were the motionless figures of four priests, robed from head to foot in black, their faces, darkened by some pigment, appearing ghastly and repulsive under the flickering flame. Their lips muttered in monotonous chant a weird incantation which sent to my head a chill of superstitious dread. High above the altar, blackened by the constantly ascending cloud of smoke, swayed uneasily a peculiar graven image of wood, hideous in disfigurement of form and diabolical visage, appearing to float upon outspread wings, and gloating down upon us through eyes glittering ominously in the fire sheen.⁴

A marvelously terrible and terrifying scene, it is made more intense, more vivid because it is told in first person. Thus again the reader is on the scene, seeing and feeling, side by side with the hero.

The reader joins the heroine, Deborah, in Gift of the Desert as she views the beauty of the Arizona desert at sunset:

It was a marvelous, somber scene stretched out below, a dreary desolation, without movement or the slightest semblance of life. An hour ago it had been wrapped in heat waves, a misty miracle, sometimes appearing as a vast sea, but now, as the sun sank slowly behind those distant serrated peaks, darker shadows lay along the level surface, with gleams here and there of gray and red, while arching over all hung the clear Arizona sky, slowly turning to purple.... She compared that sun-kissed vista with other sunsets in France and Germany, when the ground was yet red with the blood sacrificed manhood.⁵

It is the extensive use of alliteration that gives this passage particular charm. The passage appears on the first two pages of the tale. As a result the reader is caught up instantly with the splendid view; then just as instantly the reader wonders about the reference to the blood-soaked battlefields of France and England. He must read on and find out more. Parrish has cleverly captured the reader once again.

Parrish had yet other devices that he used skillfully to arouse and keep his readers' interest. For example, in many of his stories he uses mistaken identity as a device. In Love Under Fire, the heroine, Billie (Willifred) Hardy dresses in boys' clothing, for in such a disguise she can pass for just another Confederate soldier.

Mistaken identity takes a different twist in A Sword of the Old Frontier as Coubert, the hero, falls in love with Alene, but hesitates to declare his love because he thinks she is an heiress and

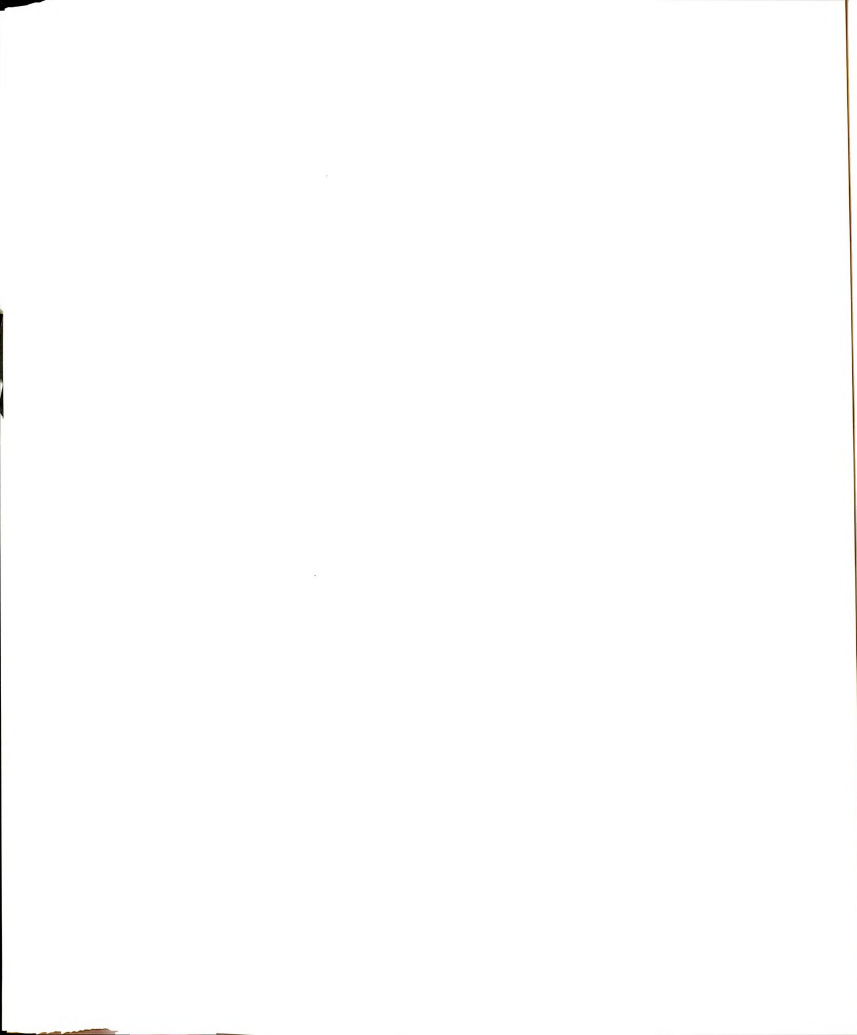
he is just a soldier; therefore class separates them. Later all comes right as Coubert discovers that Alene is not the heiress but rather her cousin, Rene, is.

Perhaps the most appealing situation occurs in When Wilderness was King. The hero, John, goes to fetch the daughter of his father's friend, believing that Elsa is an eight year old. Early in the tale he meets a lovely young lady of eighteen named Toinette and of course by the end of the story John discovers that Elsa and Toinette are the same person. This makes for the usual happy ending as John has done his duty and in doing so, falls in love.

Occasionally, mistaken identity takes yet another form as in Maid of the Forest. This time it is the heroine's turn to be confused as the hero, Hayward, has a double and the double is a scoundrel. Again, by the story's conclusion all is resolved; the double is found and dealt with and hero and heroine are united.

Mistaken identity plays a prominent role in Gordon Craig, too, when the hero, Craig, is hired to impersonate Philip Henley, the heir to a large estate. Craig's impersonation of Henley goes undiscovered until Craig decides to quit his role as Henley.

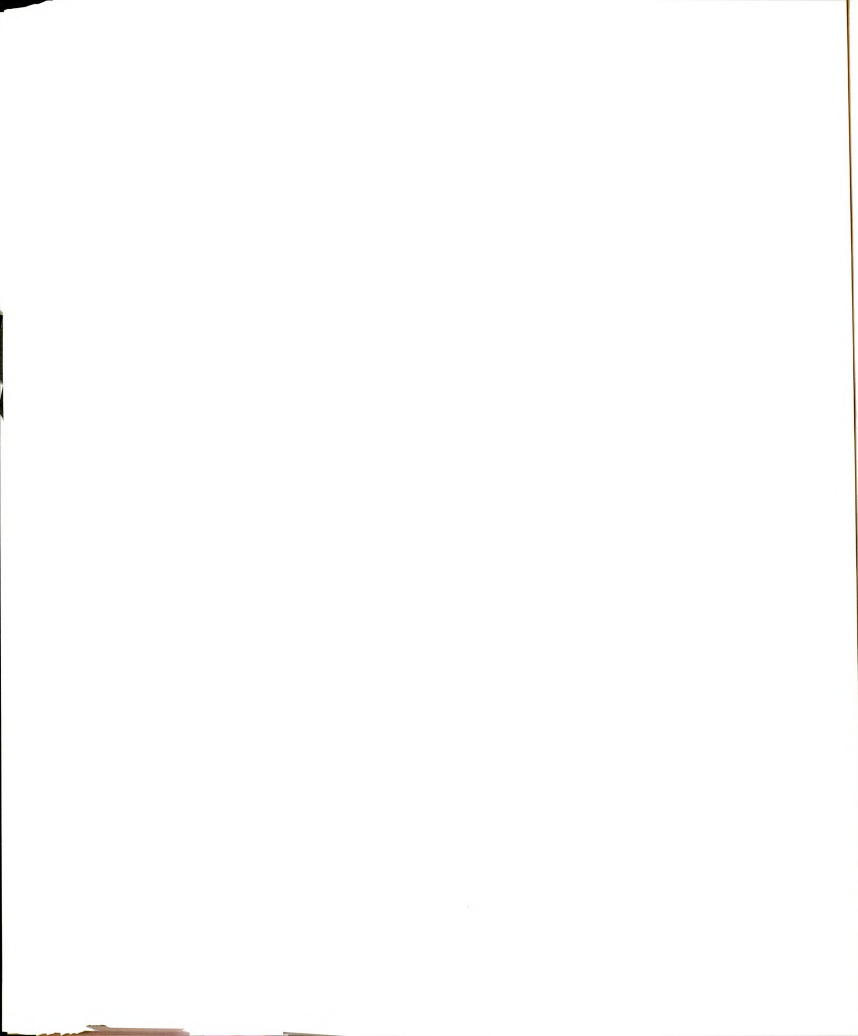
One strange story that leads the reader to wonder if the heiress heroine Natalie Coolidge is demented occurs The Case and the Girl. She appears in strange places and when she is questioned she insists that she was never there. This is not clarified until the tale draws to a close. The mystery lady turns out to be Natalie's twin sister who was spirited away shortly after the two were born. Delia, Natalie's twin, reappears as part of a plot to prove Natalie insane



so that Delia can claim the fortune after Natalie is institutionalized.

Parrish certainly uses this old device of mistaken identity in a variety of ways and as a result spins some exciting and entertaining tales. He also makes clever adaptations of themes used by other authors to create stories full of adventure, mystery, and intrigue. It is safe to assume that Parrish read many of the stories written by such famous authors as Cooper, Dumas, Twain, Dickens, Emily Bronte, and Scott. Scanty college records remain for the time Parrish attended the University of Iowa and those fail to indicate whether he took courses in world literature; nor is there any proof that he read the works of famous authors on his own. However, Parrish's use of others' themes is rather convincing evidence that he did read many of the classics and decided that since such devices helped make entertaining tales, why not adapt them and use them again? To suspect him of plagiarism is not a fair assessment; Parrish's own creativity comes through in his clever adaptations.

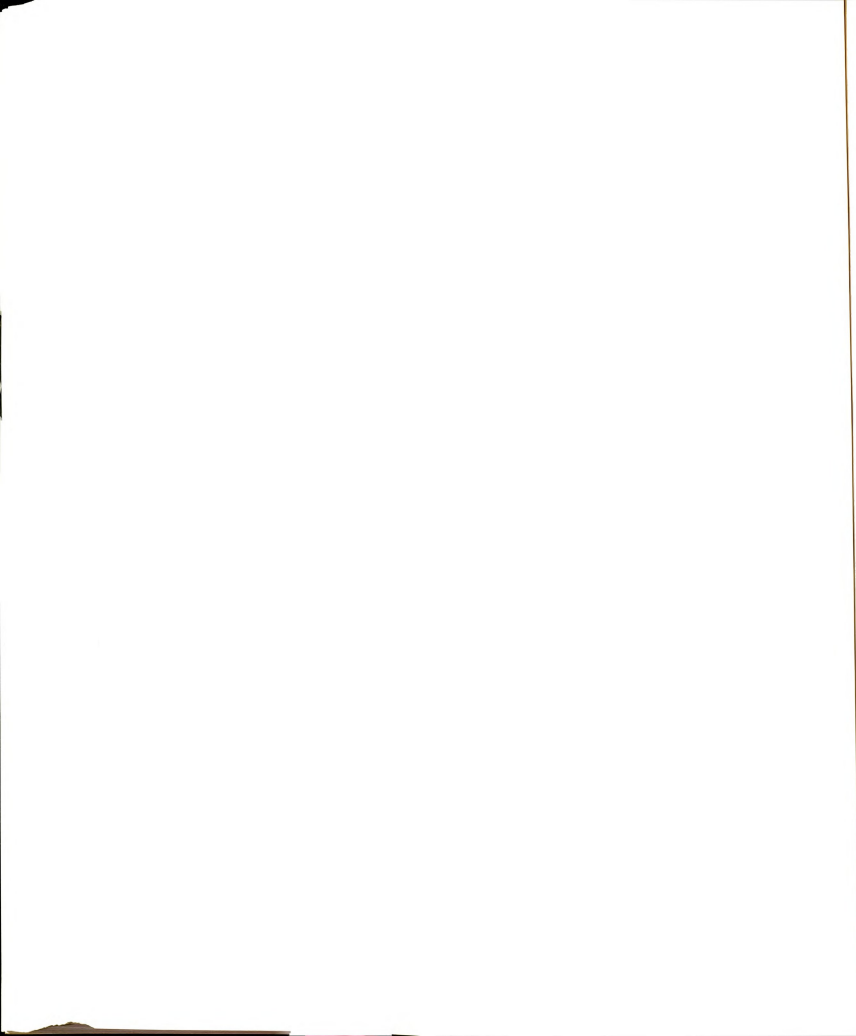
The most curious adaptation is the one in Prisoners of Chance involving Father Andre and his reencounter with Naladi whom he knew before as Marie. This situation brings to mind Dumas', The Three Musketeers in which the wicked Milady leads the priest astray. In the same story Parrish uses some aspects of Dicken's Tale of Two Cities, in which Sidney Carton changes places with Charles Darnay in order to save Darnay for Lucy Manette. Geoffrey Benteen, the hero of Prisoners of Chance, attempts to do as Carton did by offering to change places with Charles de Noyan, the husband of Eloise, whom Benteen loves. However, Parrish adapts this theme so that the



exchange does not come off. By the end of the tale Benteen learns that Eloise really does not love Charles, and Charles is killed although Benteen tries to prevent it. Again Parrish's story ends with the hero and heroine united.

Parrish adapts two of Cooper's themes also. In A Sword of the Old Frontier the hero, Coubert, a coureur du bois (man of the forest) escorts two young ladies, cousins, through Indian territory to rejoin the father of one of them, Colonel Maitland. In the course of the journey the two encounter bad Indians, a few good Indians, and a young English army major. As the tale unfolds the reader remembers Cooper's Last of the Mohicans. But Parrish changed Cooper's theme too, since his ladies are not sisters, but cousins. The man of the forest, Coubert, reminiscent of Cooper's Hawkeye (Natty Bumppo) wins one of the ladies, Alene, resembling Cora in Cooper's tale. Alene's cousin, Rene, marries the young English major, reminding one of Alice Munro and Duncan Hayward from Cooper's story. Parrish does not include an Uncas character in his tale, but the similarities abound between A Sword of the Old Frontier and The Last of the Mohicans. Parrish adapted yet another Cooper tale, The Pioneers, in Bob Hampton of Placer, in which he casts an older man as his hero. Bob Hampton reminds one of Natty Bumppo, who is much older in this segment of The Leatherstocking series.

In addition, Parrish modified the theme of identical twins -- separated at birth and reunited later -- in The Case and the Girl. Dumas used this theme in at least two of his stories, The Corsican Brothers and The Man in the Iron Mask while Twain used the same theme in The Prince and the Pauper. Parrish substitutes a pair of twin



girls who are separated at birth and reunited years later. Another Dumas device that Parrish changed to fit is the imprisonment theme of The Count of Monte Cristo. In Parrish's Shea of the Irish Brigade a political prisoner is incarcerated in a castle much the same as was the count in Dumas' tale.

Twain's Huck Finn comes to mind when one reads Parrish's Don MacGrath. MacGrath runs away from a cruel father and hitches a ride on a boat and then rides a raft. Don is around 16, a bit older than Huck, but he is savvy to the world. Don, unlike Huck, discovers that he is the long lost son of a wealthy couple which makes one think of yet another author, Horatio Alger, who wrote "rags to riches" tales.

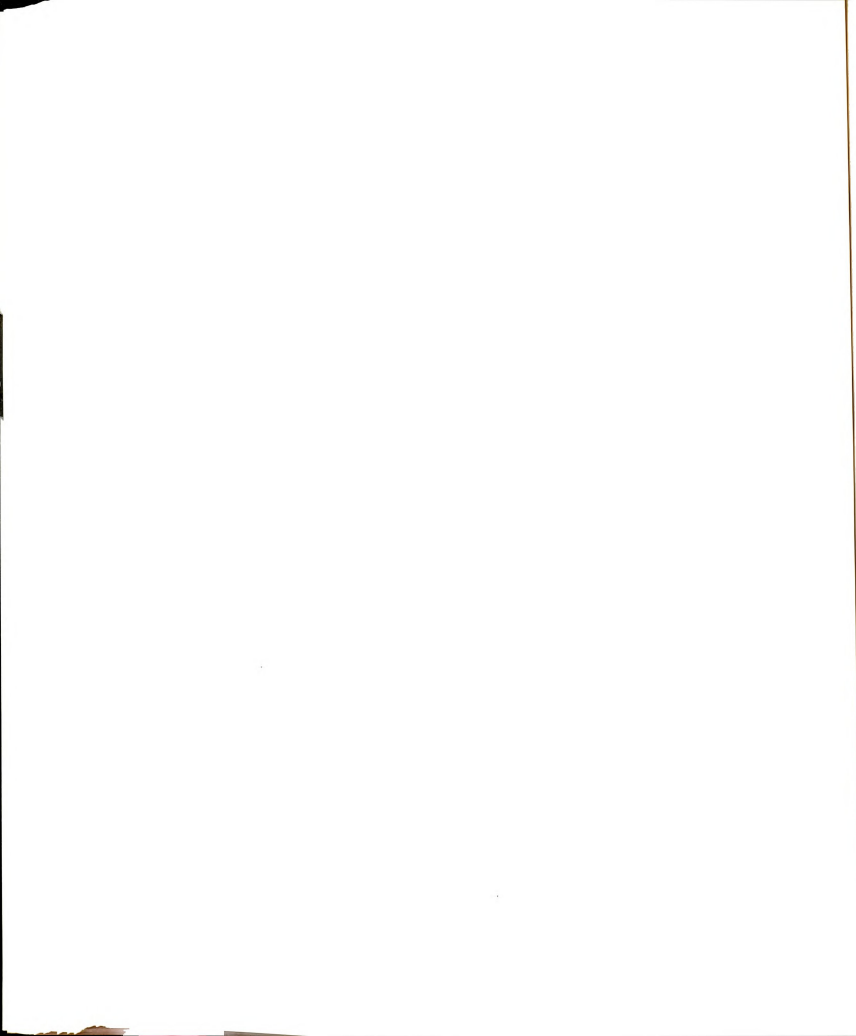
The feud Twain used in Huck Finn appears, again modified, in yet another Parrish tale, The Red Mist. Twain's feud involved two families and lovers who ran off because their families were enemies: Parrish's feud involves an evil man and his family who murder the heroine's father in a dispute over land. However, the basic "feud" theme is present even though Parrish modified it considerably.

One of the most unusual adjustments Parrish made occurs in My Lady of the South in which he uses the theme of Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre. There Parrish presents the mad woman as the mother of one of the lesser characters, Captain Calvert, who is in love with the heroine. As with Bronte's story, Parrish's mad woman burns down the Calvert home, but she does not die in the fire like Bronte's character.

Parrish apparently was reluctant to leave out Sir Walter Scott's themes; this is evident as Parrish used a similar story line in The Devil's Own, to Scott's Ivanhoe. However, again Parrish modifies

Scott's tale by substituting a mulatto, Rene, for the Jewess Rebecca. As in Scott's, the hero is drawn to the secondary heroine but does not marry her because of love for another. Stephen Knox, Parrish's hero, like Scott's hero, Ivanhoe, goes to great lengths to save the secondary heroine. Both heroes do this through a sense of obligation; however Knox does save Rene to free her from the villain Kirby, not because she had saved his life as Rebecca had saved Ivanhoe's life. The similarities in the story line are apparent even though Ivanhoe is a tale of the 13th century and The Devil's Own one of the 19th century. Both tales present secondary heroines from oppressed minorities, chivalic heroes who save them from villains with authority, and finally the heros find socially acceptable alliances with properly accredited heroines.

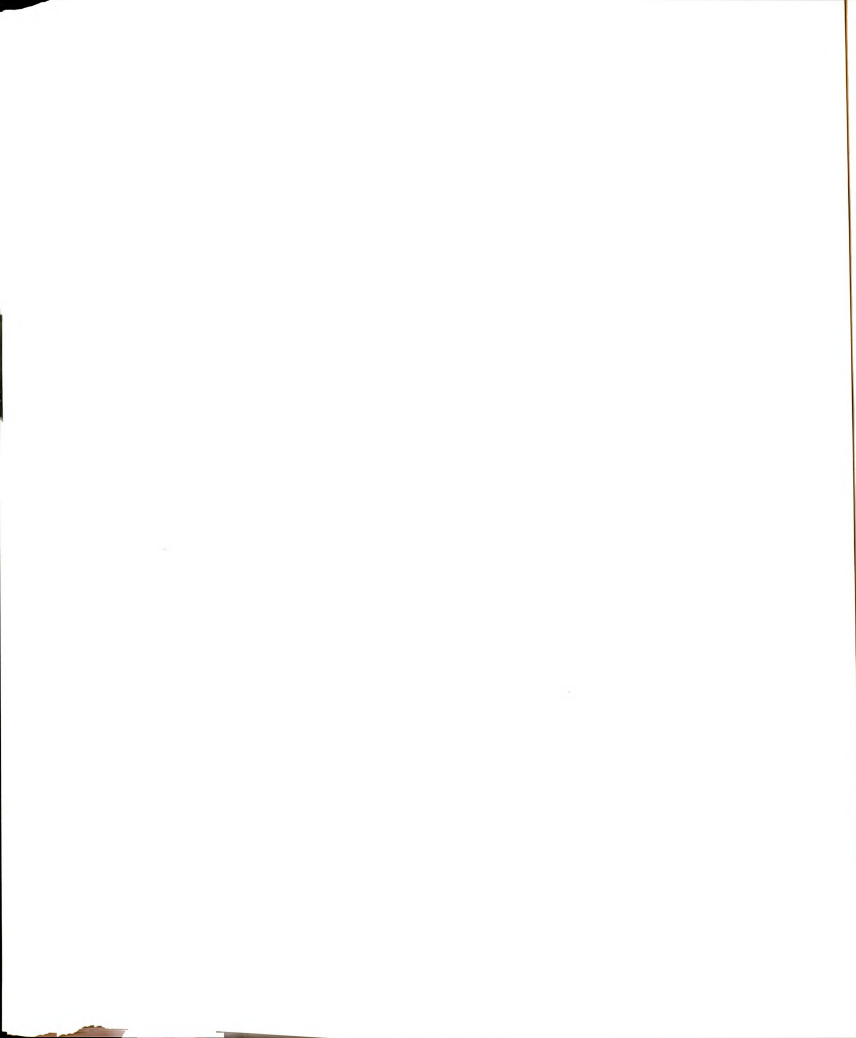
In three of his tales Parrish dealt with another often used and extremely sensitive theme -- racial mix through illegitimate births, of the union of white masters with black slaves. Such is the mysterious secret in Gordon Craig, The Devil's Own, and Love Under Fire. In Parrish's time such a theme probably could attract a reading audience more completely than it could today. However, to read about such mixed relations was exciting simply because miscegenation was a taboo. In addition, each of the cases involved a villainous white master who took advantage of a defenseless black female. The worst of the lot is Charles Le Gaire, who sends the poor slave woman back into the field after she delivers and eventually has her beaten to death. Parrish makes justice prevail here, however, as he has Le Gaire's bastard son murder him out of revenge. In Gordon Craig, Charles Henley, the mulatto son of Ol' Sallie and Judge Henley, ends up a



loser as he tries to cheat the legal heir out of the estate. In The Devil's Own, the hero helps the mulatto half-sister of the heroine escape the villain, but later the poor girl is killed.

Parrish obtained credibility and authenticity in his stories by including actual historical personalities. In Bob Hampton of Placer the final scenes focus on Custer and the battle of Little Big Horn. Chief Pontiac is included in A Sword of the Old Frontier. Indians from many tribes, such as Ottawa, Illinois, Sacs and Foxes appear in many of Parrish's stories, such as When Wilderness was King, Maid of the Forest, Beyond the Frontier, The Devil's Own, Molly McDonald, A Sword of the Old Frontier, Bob Hampton of Placer, and Prisoners of Chance. In fact, much of the historical fiction and Westerns Parrish wrote includes Indians, most often the villainous sort. In his novels about the Civil War and the Revolution famous personalities are often characters in the stories. Washington, for example, is featured in My Lady of Doubt, while Lee and Longstreet are part of My Lady of the North and Love Under Fire. This device helps the reader put history into perspective and proper chronology while enjoying an entertaining story.

Many authors of historical fiction take liberties with chronology, excusing it as poetic license, since historical fiction is just that, fiction. Thus it matters little if the real personalities appear in places and at times they could not have done so. Most authors realize that the majority of readers are not concerned with precise historical accuracy, but instead wish to be entertained. Therefore some authors adjust chronology when it will enhance the reader's entertainment. Even the serious student of history will

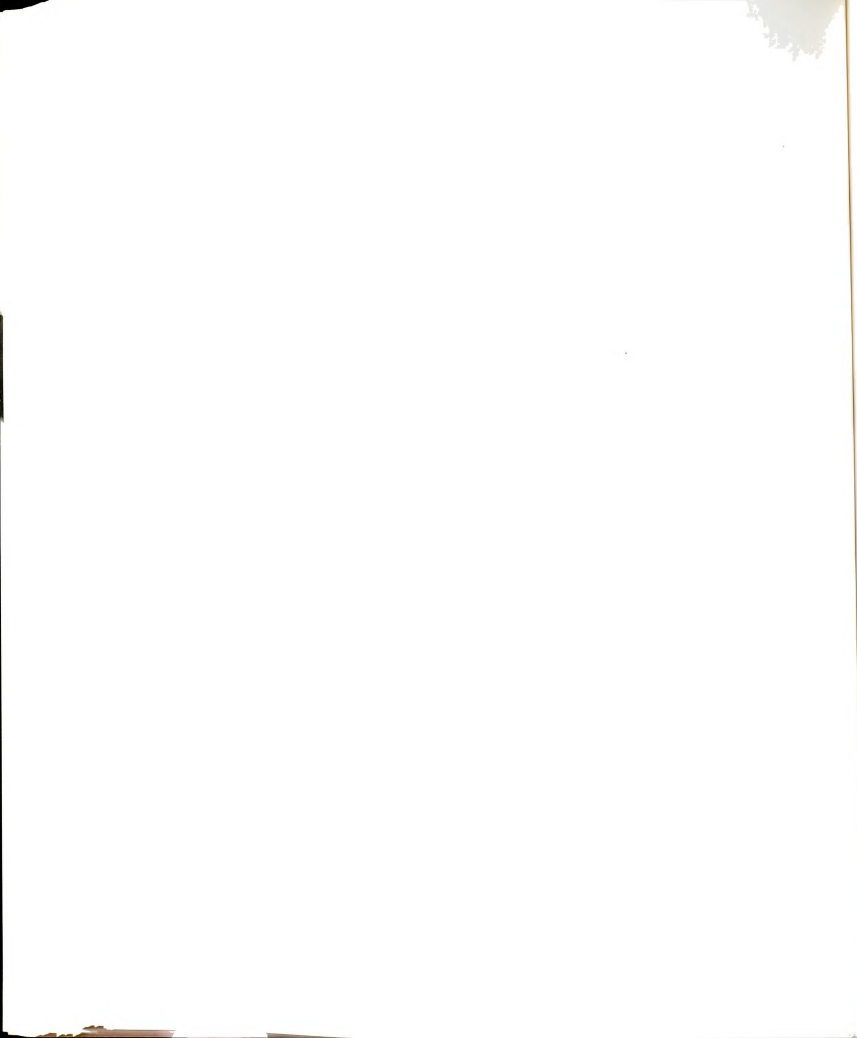


often "overlook" such inaccuracies when an exciting and entertaining tale is presented. Parrish used this device infrequently. One instance occurs in Shea of the Irish Brigade, in which he introduces a hideous dwarf named Gospele who was a henchman to Duke de Saule during the reign of Louis XV. History records that a real person, also a dwarf, lived at court during the reign of Louis XVI and was often used as a courier for the Royalists during the Revolution. Did Parrish know of this dwarf and adapt some for his fiction or did he just determine a dwarf would enhance his tale never realizing a counterpart of his Gospele really lived in the court of Louis XV's son? Whatever Parrish's reason his dwarf Gospele, was splendidly horrid both in appearance and behavior and added much to an exciting story.

Richberg, French court dwarf, used by Royalists in Revolution to pass in and out of Paris as an infant in nurse's arms with dangerous dispatches in his baby-wrappings -- he was only 23 inches high.⁶

In the Revolutionary War tale, My Lady of Doubt, a colorful kaleidoscope enhances the scene at High Street, Callowhill where the British General Howe has his quarters. The hero describes the uniforms of the soldiers there. Some Britishers wore scarlet coats, some wore blue indicating artillery and cavalry; the Hessians wore red and yellow, or the green indicating the rifle-corps and others wore the kilts of the Highlanders.

In A Sword of the Old Frontier, the hero describes a sentry at Fort Chartres who wore a line uniform of light blue, stained once white small -- clothes and a dusty cockaded hat. The grubby guard becomes more real with the description.

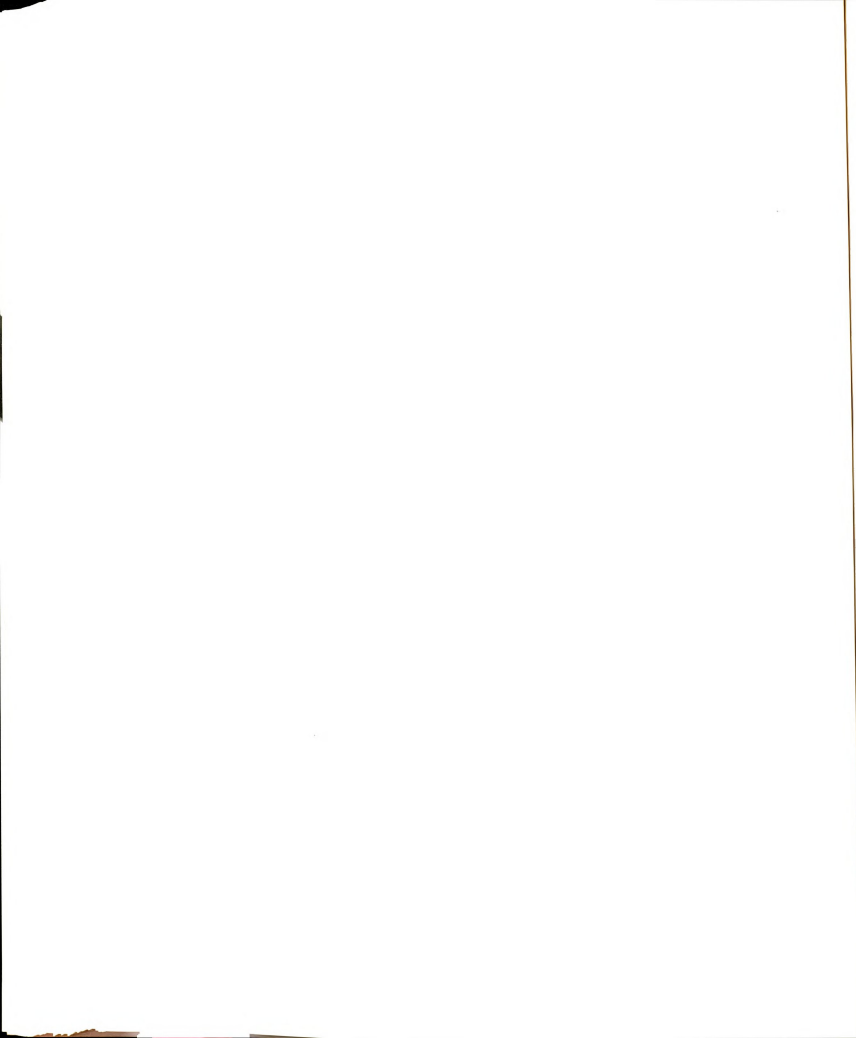


Certainly the vivid, although brief, colorful descriptions enhance even further Parrish's exciting tales and it matters not that the descriptions may not be completely authentic as they are too general.

As other authors have done, Parrish draws heavily from his own incredibly varied background and incorporates his experiences into his stories. Parrish was a lawyer part of his life, thus he has lawyers appear in significant roles in several tales, as in Gordon Craig, The Strange Case of Cavendish, and Gift of the Desert. Strangely his lawyers are scoundrels out to make a fast buck at their client's expense. Perhaps his experiences as a lawyer made him painfully aware of how many in his profession were less than ethical. Later, after leaving his law practice, Parrish was for a period of time a prospector in Colorado and Arizona, here again, he drew on his own experiences, using mine scenes in Gift of the Desert, Beth Norvell, and The Strange Case of Cavendish.

Parrish's long years as a journalist are reflected as he casts two of his heroines as newspaper reporters, Stella Donovan in The Strange Case of Cavendish, and Helen Probyn in The Air Pilot. Why did he use female reporters? Apparently there is no particular reason for his choice; just possibly he was for women's rights and this was the way he expressed it. Of course, an independent female doing a man's work in a man's world was a novel approach in creating an exciting adventure story, sometimes Parrish made good use of.

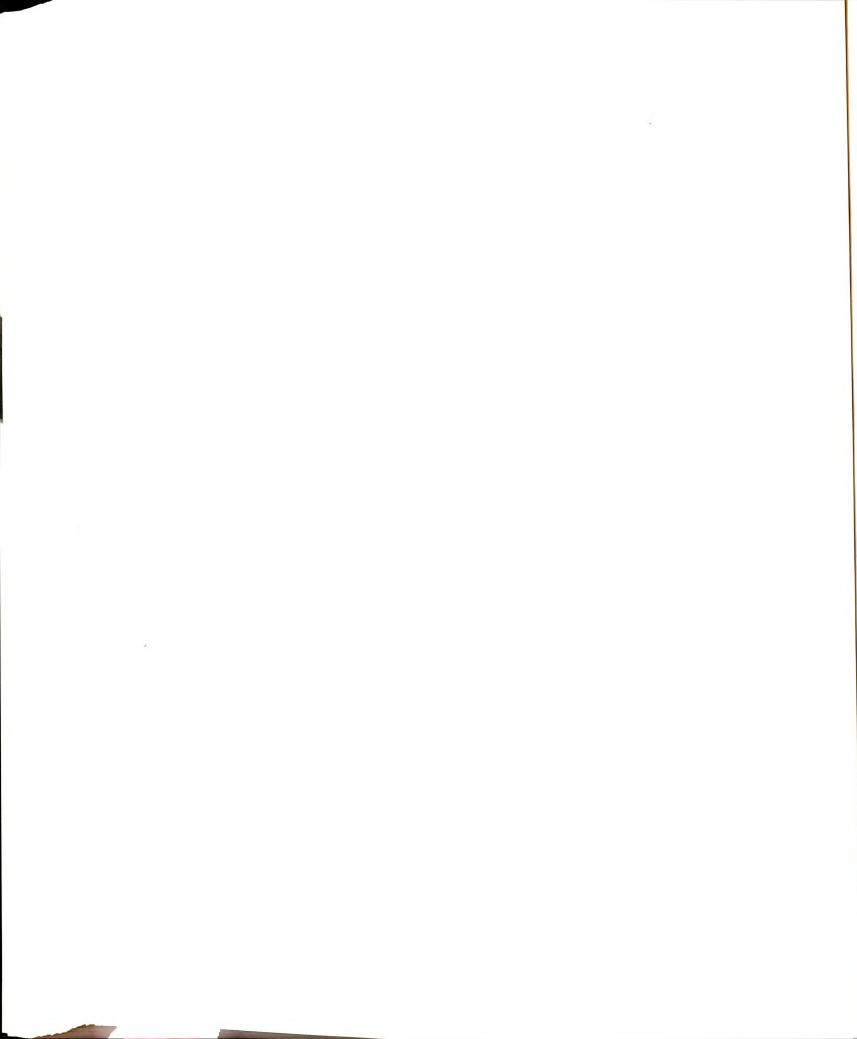
Three other heroines work for a living: Deborah Meredith is a nurse, Beth Norvell and Viola Bernard (Henley) are actresses. Again, one wonders if Parrish was slightly ahead of his time when he cast



Beth and Viola as actresses, who were not yet accepted in many segments of society. Parrish's two actress heroines are proper married ladies which may have put a different light on their occupations. Of course, nursing has always been considered women's work, so that Parrish did not need to worry about reader acceptance of such a heroine.

Criticism of various social groups is evident in most of Parrish's tales. Hatred and suspicion surface as the hero and characters, make derogatory statements of about minorities. Jews are slandered more frequently than are other minorities as they appear in many of the historical and spy type mysteries. No doubt Parrish did not include Jews in his Westerns since they were not a prominent element in western expansion. But Parrish included a sinister Jew in his Huck Finn type story, Don McGrath. Jews are sometimes involved in subversive anti-American plots; such as the situation in The Mystery of the Silver Dagger. They are usually stereotyped as conniving and crafty in business dealings; in one instance these so-called Jewish characteristics are attributed to a Gentile (Coubert) in A Sword of the Old Frontier as he haggles over his pay for a dangerous mission. One Jewish character, Ivan Waldron (The Mystery of the Silver Dagger) is doubly maligned as he is a Russian Bolshevik in addition to being Jewish. Perhaps Parrish was himself prejudiced against Jews or perhaps he was merely reflecting the contemporary anti-Semitic prejudices of his era.

Other minorities are maligned, especially Indians. Since this theme was used so successfully by other authors Parrish may have decided to capitalize on it. Parrish's Indian villains are usually



presented as a tribal group, although occasionally he focuses on an individual Indian. Perhaps Parrish's justification for this approach was that hatred toward an entire group seems more justified if it is a concentrated representation of all that is presumed to be evil within an ethnic element.

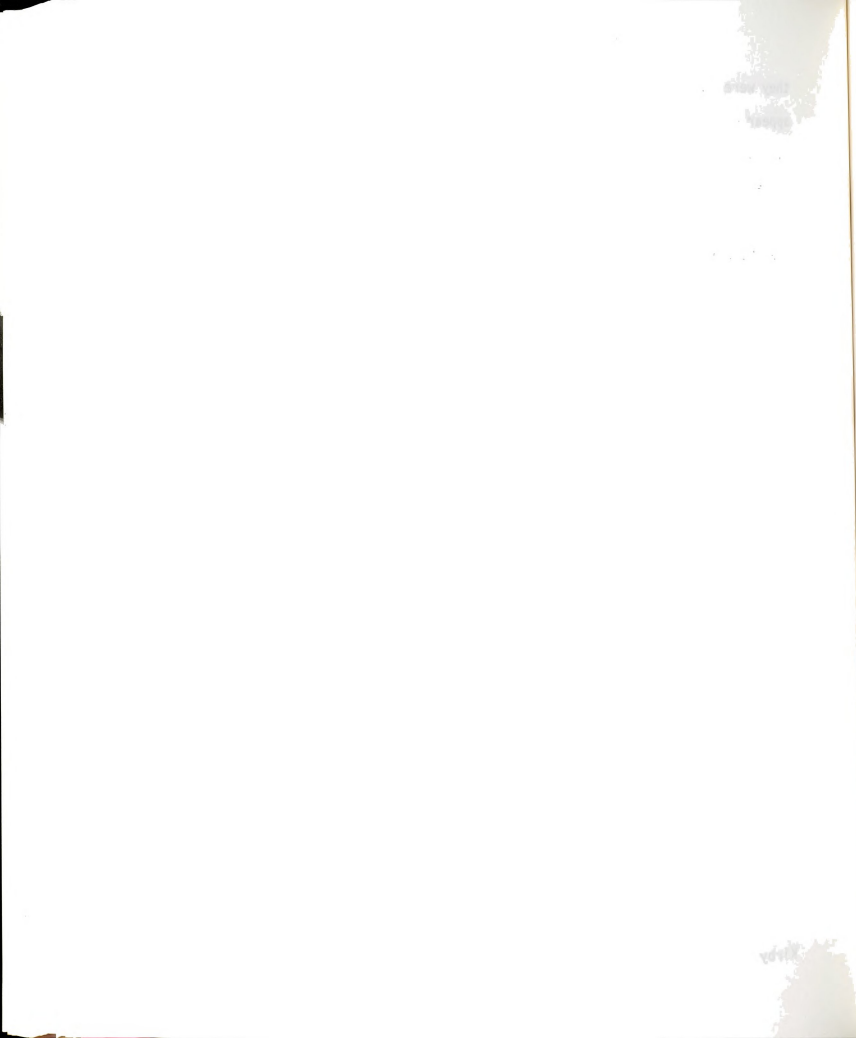
Only one character with Indian blood escapes the negative criticism Parrish gives all the rest. Rene D'Auvray, the heroine of Maid of the Forest, is at first viewed with disdain by the hero who sees her as just another untrustworthy redskin. Only when the hero learns that she is half Indian, and a valuable go-between for Indians and Whites does his prejudice diminish. One wonders if perhaps Parrish felt chagrined over his bigotry and that of others and thus determined to cast an Indian for once in an affirmative role, or if he decided that a slightly different heroine was necessary to his tale. Yet another question arises when one ponders why it was acceptable for this heroine to be part Indian and yet marry the hero. In The Devil's Own the mulatto heroine (also named Rene) cannot be allowed to marry the hero or even become too emotionally involved with him -- in fact, she is killed and the hero settles for her clinging vine half-sister who lacks the strength of Rene. These two cases most certainly reflect societal attitudes of the early twentieth century.

Perhaps a great deal of the anti-Mexican feeling as it appears in Parrish's novels was the result of many years of border hostilities between Mexico and the U.S. Not only did the Mexicans usually speak Spanish which made them seem more alien, but they also often came into the U.S. illegally and worked for so much less that

they were hired instead of Americans. All these factors made Mexicans appear more suspect and as a result many Americans, especially those living in the Southwest, distrusted and hated them. This hatred is reflected in Parrish's tales in which Mexicans, like other minorities, are considered evil. In only one story (Beth Norvell) does he have a decent Mexican story and an acceptable Hispanic female, Mercedes.

Blacks in Parrish's stories are ridiculed and demeaned also, but ordinarily in a much less vicious way. They are almost never prominent characters; only two are villains, Henley and his mother, Sallie, in Gordon Craig. The Black is usually a slave and relegated to a serving capacity, such as valet, steward, maid, or housekeeper. He is seen usually as none too bright, superstitious, devoted to masters (if the masters are kind), slow but diligent, eager to please and always kind, especially to women. Parrish's post-Civil War stories feature them as hotel or stable help or porters at rail stations. They are extremely polite, solicitous, but granted nearly non-person status. Even Ol' Sallie in her sullen way is solicitous, ever careful to avoid trouble.

Only one Black assumes heroic proportions, Rene Beaucaire. Rene is the daughter of Judge Beaucaire's wastrel son and a slave on the Beaucaire plantation. Rene is adopted by the Judge and grows up with the Judge's daughter, who never realizes she is mulatto until the Judge loses his estate to the scoundrel gambler Kirby. Subsequently the Judge dies of a heart attack. Rene is depicted as a lady, intelligent, conscientious, determined to flee from her new master, Kirby, because with the Judge's death Rene is classified as a slave,

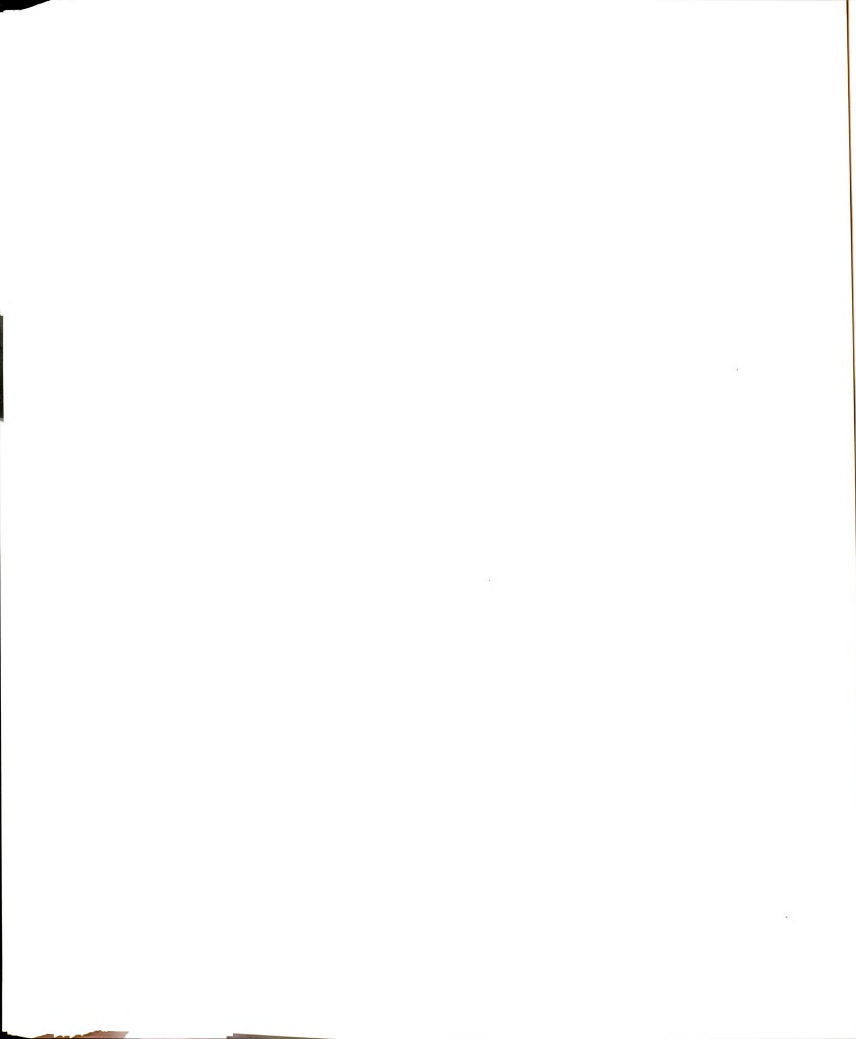


even though she was legally adopted by the Judge. In Parrish's tales, with the exception of Rene and Henley, the Black is easily identified first by color, second by dialect and third by characteristics such as slowness, superstitiousness and dullness of brain.

Parrish directs criticism, too, mostly by negative stereotyping, toward other ethnic groups. For Irish, Germans, Swedish, sometimes the French and always the Mexicans are identified by their particular dialect. Many of the stories are heavily peppered with such foreign pronunciations of English words as with vee (we), vuz (was), eef (if), ould (old), ye (you), chat (cheat), Oi'll (I'll), gud (good), desarvin (deserving), oi'd (I'd), de (the), dat (that), eet (it), tree (three), ver' (very), odder (other), vay (way), yer (you), tink (think) and mosch (much).

Those ethnic groups are mainly maligned further by Parrish's physical descriptions: the Pole is described as appearing to be of no high type, the Jew as having the characteristic unmistakable beak nose. One Jew was described as strangely burly for a Jew, which meant Mexicans have an oily look and a leering grin; the Swede and the Irish are phlegmatic except under stress; and the French are overly affected and at times overbearing.

Each time a certain minority element appears in Parrish's tales the reader must view the stereotyping from the perspective of the story being told. For example, in Shea of the Irish Brigade, a story of the Seven Years War circa 1750 in France, the hero is an Irishman, thus the Irish are maligned only when the hero is vilified by the villains who in this case are the Austrians, the English and one



Frenchman, named de Saule, who bore a personal grudge against the hero.

In A Sword of the Old Frontier, the hero, a Frenchman, lashes out at a half-breed (half Indian, half English) and calls him "villain." This story takes place in and around the Illinois territory during the years just following the French and Indian War. Obviously the hero would so judge the half-breed since the half-breed represents two hated elements, English and Indian, and the French had just lost their territory to the English.

Religion and individual religious beliefs are respected by the hero and heroines but not by villains. For example, in Prisoners of Chance, Benteen, the hero, who holds no particular religious belief, respects Eloise's devotion to Roman Catholicism. In the same story, however, Naladi, the villainess blasphemes against Christianity and refuses to repent. In several stories where the heroine is married already and not to the hero, no amount of pleading on the part of the hero will persuade the heroine to divorce her husband, no matter how much of a scoundrel he is.

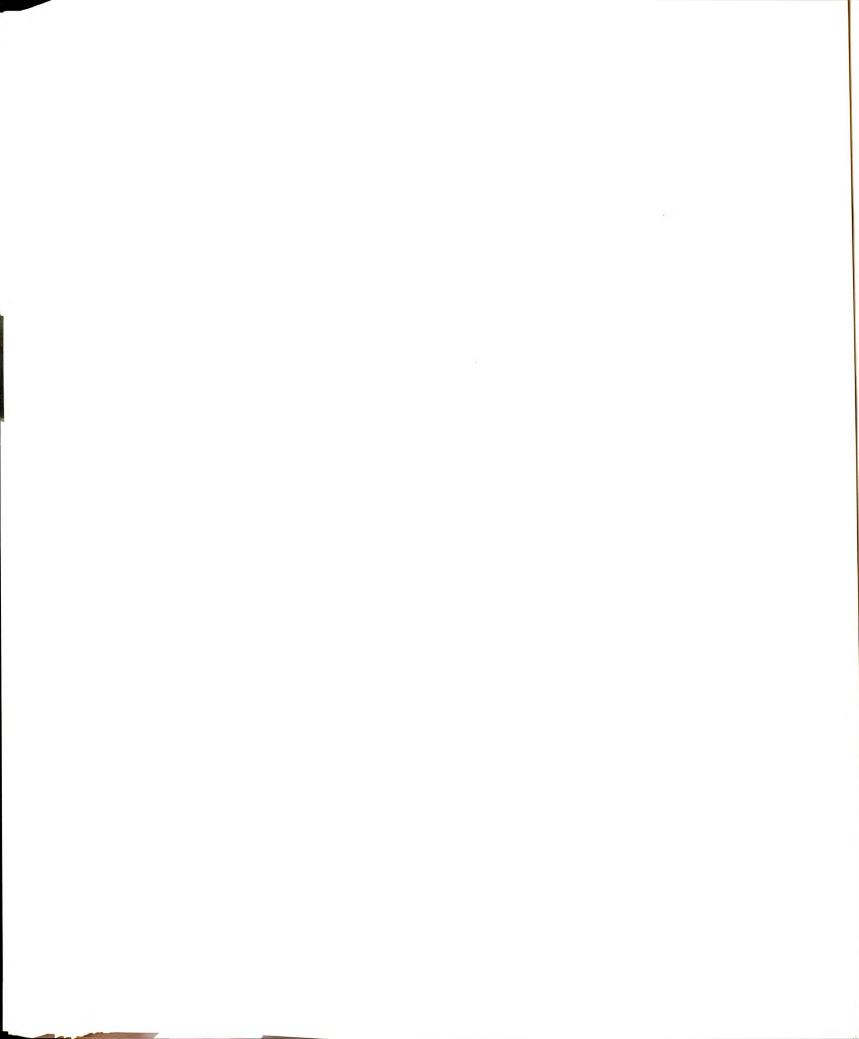
It is evident that Parrish reflects the views regarding religion held during the various periods he wrote about. Whether Parrish was a believer or not, he skillfully includes attitudes regarding religion in America, using his characters as his spokespersons. His approach suggests that attitudes were changing at least among some segments of the population, so that the reader realizes that time, ethnic and racial background and environment are controlling factors of religious attitudes.



Through reading and then analyzing Parrish's stories it has become apparent that Parrish was most assuredly a skillful, alert and perceptive observer of many segments of Western society, during the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries in America and Europe -- sometimes during war, sometimes not. He gave his readers exciting stories and at the same time reflected social and cultural attitudes via his characters. Undoubtedly, a large part of Parrish's success as a writer of popular stories lies in the fact that he was particularly aware of his readers' attitudes, their needs, wants, desires, dreams, fantasies, and most importantly, their overwhelming demand to be entertained.

Since Parrish was so in tune with and so sensitive to his readers, why then did his popularity fade indeed, vanish after almost two decades of popularity? Parrish's stories did not have the sustaining power, obviously, of those of Zane Grey or Edgar Rice Burroughs, both of whom wrote when Parrish did. Like Grey, at least, Parrish's Westerns are replete with splendid descriptions of the glorious West in the years just after the Civil War and on through into the years before World War I. Parrish's characters are as strong, capable, dedicated and determined as Grey's; why, then, did Parrish's stories fade from popularity? Some critics would claim that his characters are too strong, too dedicated and too capable to be real people. Others would claim just the opposite -- that they lack substance -- such "goody-goodies" and such "baddy-baddies" are not real people either.

Some critics find Parrish's plots too contrived, too predictable and in many cases simply adaptations of stories written by famous



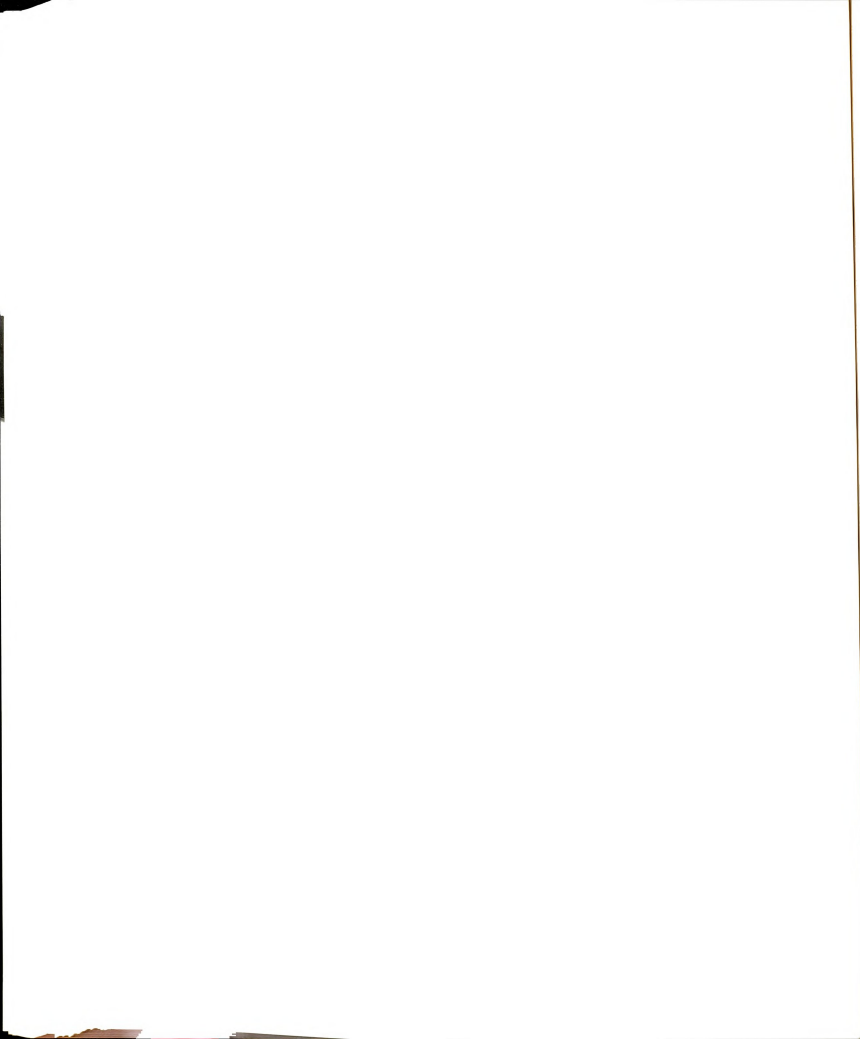
authors. Certainly, many would criticize Parrish's awkward, often stilted arrangement of words, declaring that such flowery, artificial language does not aid in creating an exciting tale, but that rather it creates a melodrama which only some readers will continue to enjoy. Upon analysis it is evident that Parrish did, indeed, borrow heavily from the works of others -- as Emerson expressed it, "imitation is suicide" -- he committed, quite unwittingly, literary suicide. If such is the verdict, suicide was an extremely long time in coming. Parrish was acclaimed as a great writer -- one critic from the now defunct Detroit Times was prompted to write this about Parrish in 1909:

American literature owes much to Mr. Parrish, and he is increasing the debt still more with every new volume. There is none among the noteworthy of the day just like him, and very few in the notable army who have preceded him.⁷

If this statement is but even partially correct, the question arises again -- why did Parrish's stories fade after they sold three quarters of a million copies sold in one decade?

Some probably found his style too verbose, too sentimental, he lacked the straightforward style of other authors such as Garland, Harte and Crane. Parrish, like Crane, however, was a journalist, and wrote of the West, the sea and the Civil War; why then did Crane sustain and Parrish did not? Perhaps Parrish lacks the conciseness of Crane. Parrish overdid the sentimentality, but then again, many sentimental tales remain popular.

Like Harte, also a journalist, Parrish wrote tales of the West. Some critics claim that only Harte's early works are of quality and that his later stories are definitely mediocre or poor imitations of



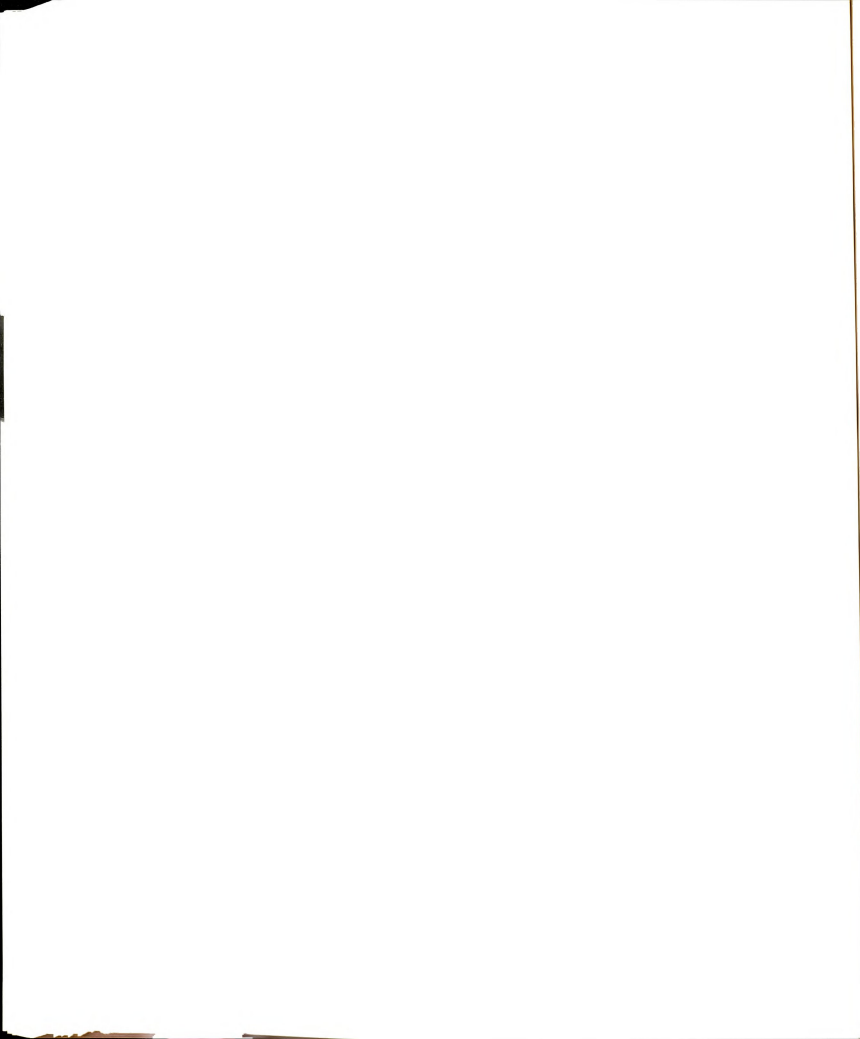
his earlier works. If this be the case, why has Harte endured and Parrish has not? Is it merely a matter of the angle of realism, or just the fickle tastes of the reading audience?

Like Cooper, Parrish was well-educated and had vast and varied experiences dealing with the law. Like Garland, Harte, Crane and Grey, Parrish spent years in the West as a prospector and as a reporter for the Denver area newspapers. He relied heavily on themes that Cooper, Crane, Garland and Harte also used, but perhaps such reliance was not enough. Perhaps his sentimental approach, his contrived plots, his verbosity in a time when such devices were giving way to conciseness, were part of the problem. Definitely his intense stereotyping of many groups which showed bigotry plus the ever changing tastes of the reading audience were other factors which contributed to his literary demise.

In spite of never having to resort to "vanity press" as Grey or Crane did, or fail with his first attempt at writing as Cooper did, Parrish simply did not endure. Maybe Parrish's immediate success led him to believe that his readers would always want this sort of romantic fiction, would not or could not change as the literature of America moved more toward realism. Maybe he did not notice that he was hopelessly out of step. This is puzzling as Parrish had much in common with those authors he emulated.

Parrish's apparent inability to recognize the change in literary trends reminds me of my own grandfather who bought into a buggy whip factory just as automobiles were catching on.

No one answer will suffice to explain why after two decades of great popularity as a formula writer Parrish's popularity faded and



eventually vanished. Now in the 1980's scarcely anyone has ever even heard of Randall Parrish, whose fiction captured at least a half million readers during the first decades of the twentieth century.

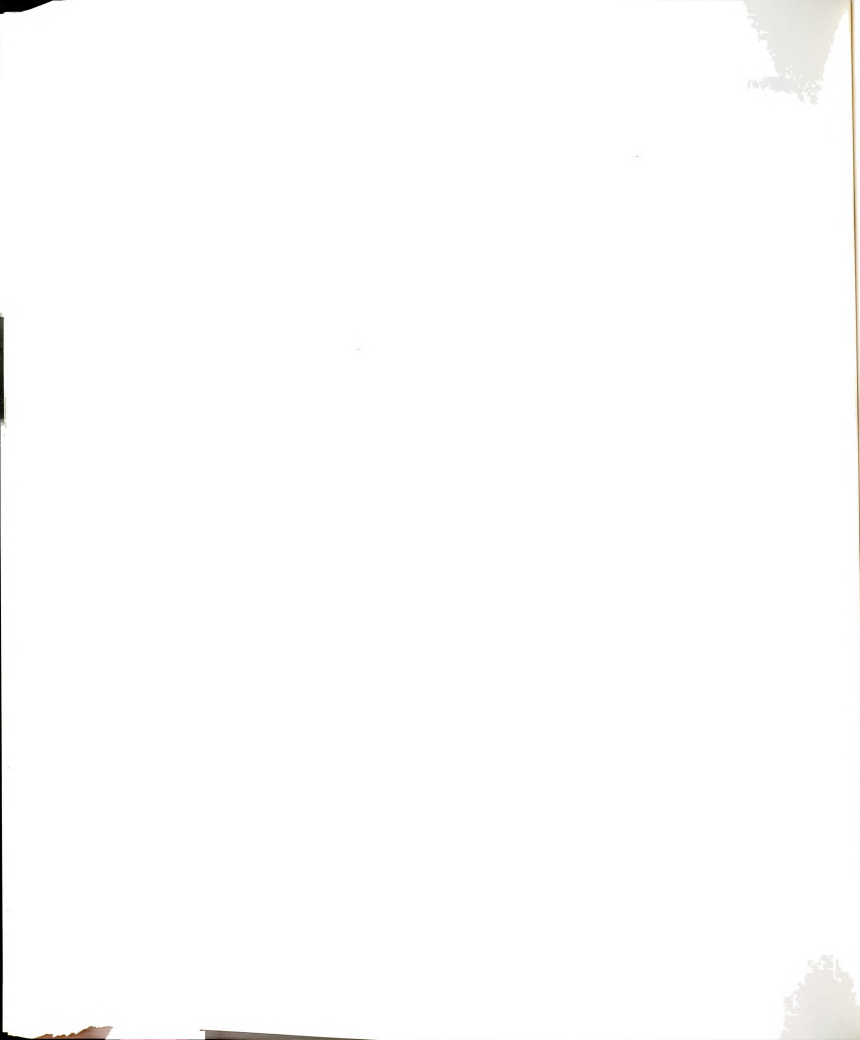
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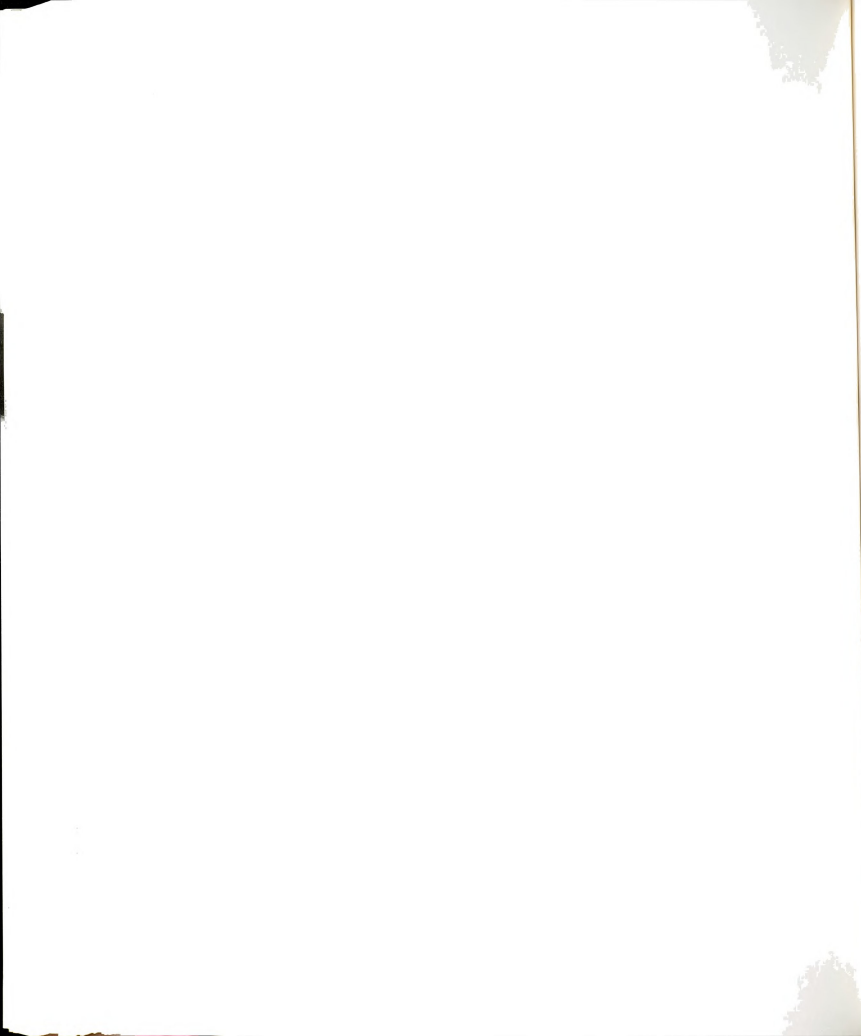
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Endnotes

- ¹Kunitz and Haycraft, Eds., 20th Century American Authors, p. 578.
- ²____, The Detroit Times, Summer 1909.
- ³Parrish, The Air Pilot, p. 281.
- ⁴Parrish, Prisoners of Chance, p. 247.
- ⁵Parrish, Gift of the Desert, pp. 1, 2.
- ⁶Harris, Detroit Free Press, 2-2-82, p. 7D.
- ⁷____, The Detroit Times, Summer 1909.



APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

Tables

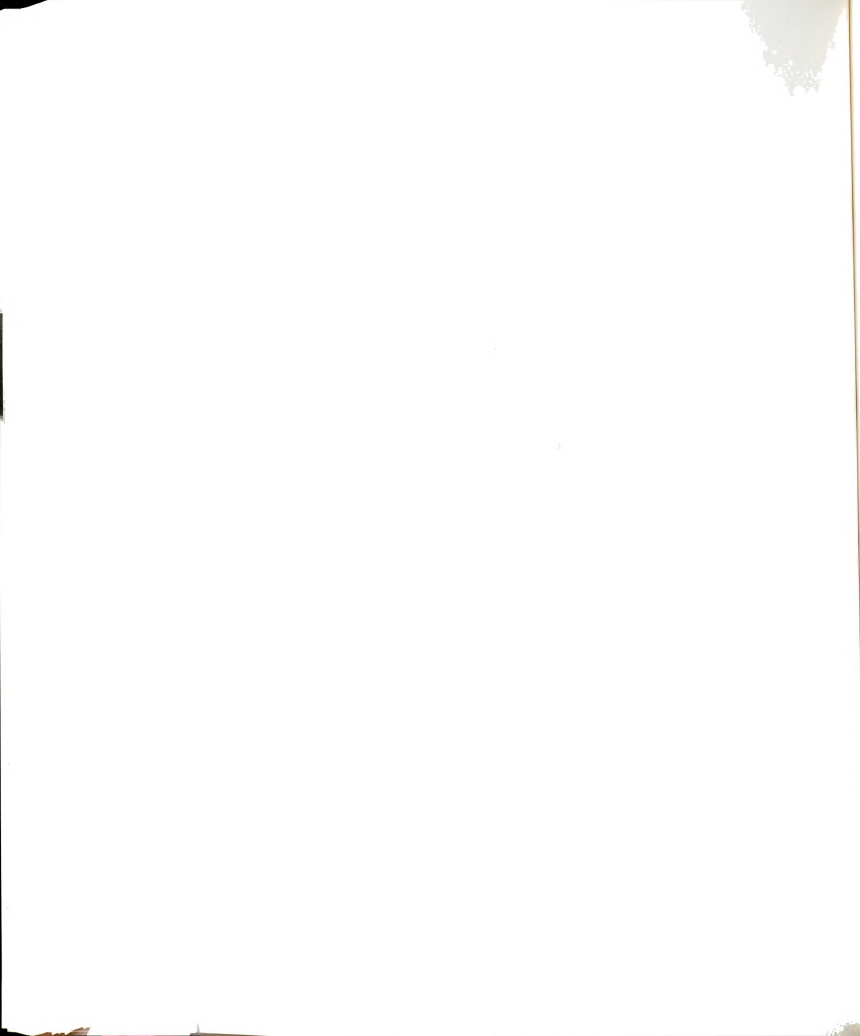


Table 1. Conclusions regarding hero based on category and date of publication

All heroes Caucasian		6 exceptions: Coubert - 40; Hampton - 40+; Wayland - 20; Hollis - 37; McGrath - 16-17; Knox - 20
Usually mid twenties to mid thirties		
23 in military or once were		
Always strong		
Usually native born Americans		4 exceptions: Carlyle - English; Coubert, Dessard and DeArtigny - French
Hero remains relatively static. Slight age differential.		Exceptions: Carlyle, McGrath
Education seems to be more formal in Civil War tales and spy stories.		
Possible reasons for three foreign born heroes		
A Sword of the Old Frontier: 1763 - French and Indian War	Often well educated - either formal or informal through military proud of education and general background - sorry for any temporary falling away from family, etc. Good background, usually moral - especially toward women - latter day knight (often only child, although not usually important to story).	
The Air Pilot: 1913 - French and air transportation, close to war time, World War I	Often a bigot Respectful of all deserving respect <u>Very</u> chauvinistic	Anti-Indian, Jew, Mexican, German Patronizing with Blacks Especially toward women

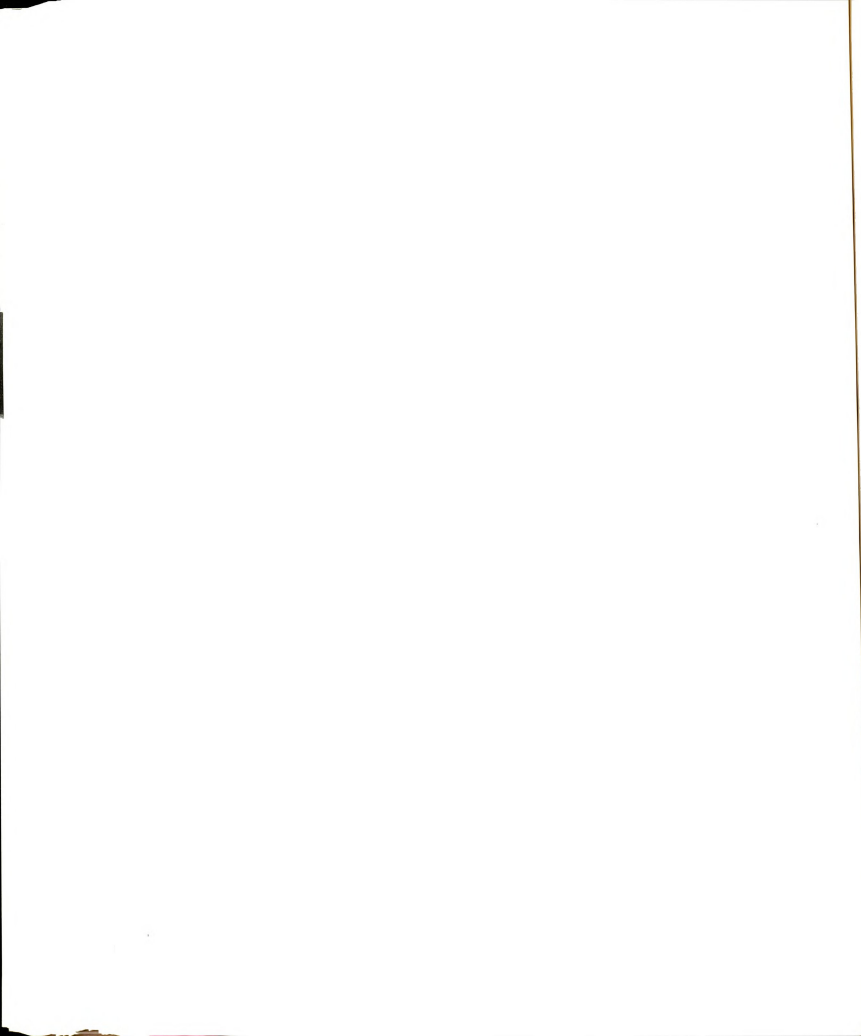


Table 1. (Continued)

<p>Shea of the Irish Brigade: Time - circa late 1700's. Just interested in European wars?</p>	<p>Personal appearance vigorous - indicates inner strength of character</p>	<p>Often overly concerned about how he looks to others, especially women</p>
	<p>Insight into others' characters, great determiner of character of others - sensed good and evil</p>	
	<p>Dogged determination, especially in pursuit of duty and heroism</p>	<p>But not vengeful - will fight when need arises - then overcome with battle (i.e. <u>When Wilderness was King</u>)</p>
	<p>Not overly religious but respectful of those who are</p>	
	<p>In spite of long or frequent contact with civilization hero remains quite good - not quite innocent but good - recognizes bad aspects of society</p>	
	<p>Some basic qualities of Leatherstocking but unlike Leatherstocking, Parrish's hero prefers companionship of others and the married life after he meets the right woman</p>	
	<p>Very obedient - abides by rules of military if he is in military - law abiding always</p>	

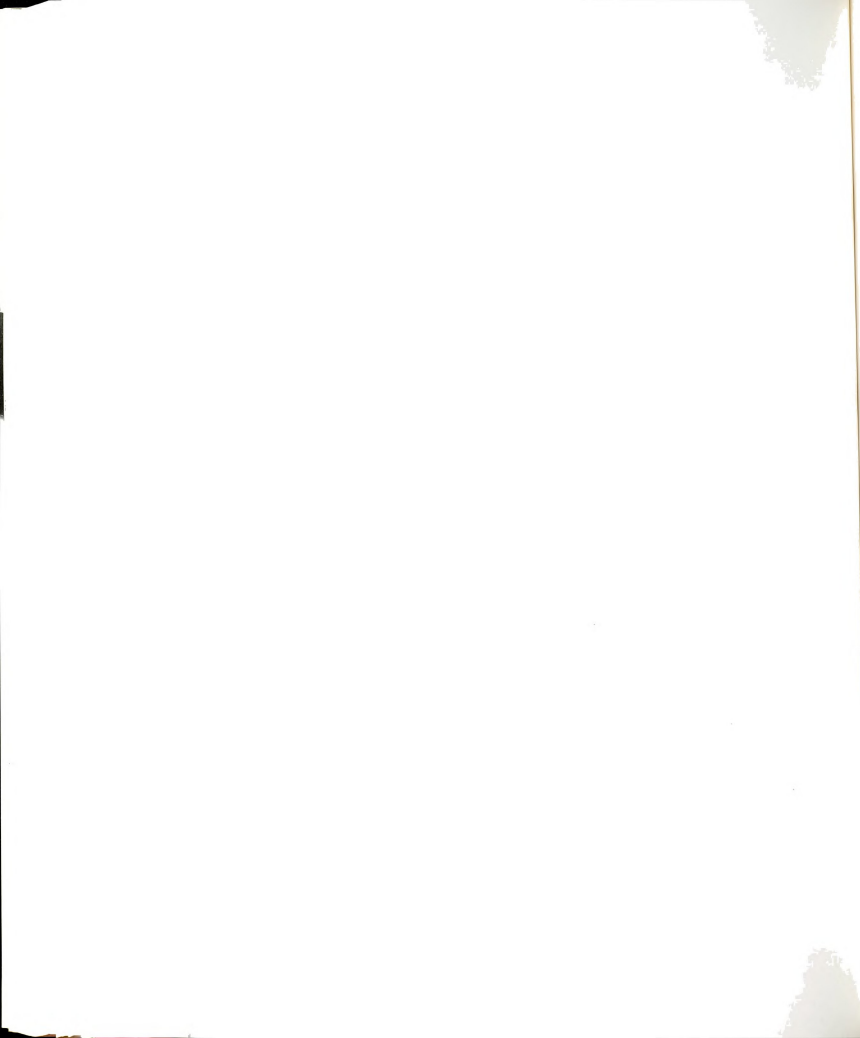


Table 2. Novels by category and publication date

Date	Historical Fiction	Western	Mystery-Spy-Intrigue
1904	When Wilderness Was King My Lady of the North	--	--
1905	A Sword of the Old Frontier	--	--
1906	--	Bob Hampton of Placer	--
1907	--	Beth Norvell	--
1908	Prisoners of Chance	--	The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel
1909	My Lady of the South	--	
1910	--	Keith of the Border	
1911	My Lady of Doubt Love Under Fire	--	Don McGrath
1912	--	Molly McDonald	--
1913	Maid of the Forest	--	Gordon Craig The Air Pilot
1914	Shea of the Irish Brigade The Red Mist	--	--
1915	Beyond the Frontier	--	--
1916	--	--	Contraband
1917	The Devil's Own	--	--
1918	Wolves of the Sea	--	The Strange Case of Cavendish
1919	--	Comrades of Peril	--
1920	--	--	The Mystery of the Silver Dagger

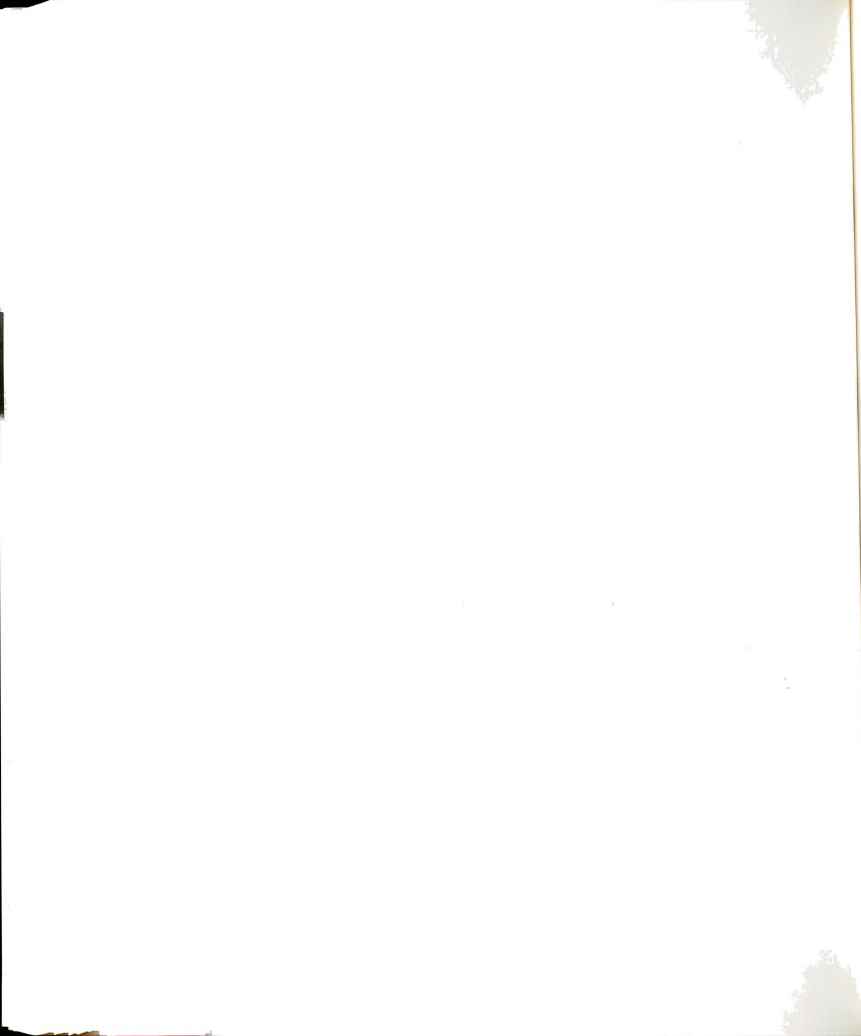


Table 2. (Continued)

Date	Historical Fiction	Western	Mystery-Spy-Intrigue
1921	--	--	--
1922	-	Gift of the Desert	The Case and the Girl
Non-Fiction			
1905		Historical Illinois	
1907		The Great Plains	

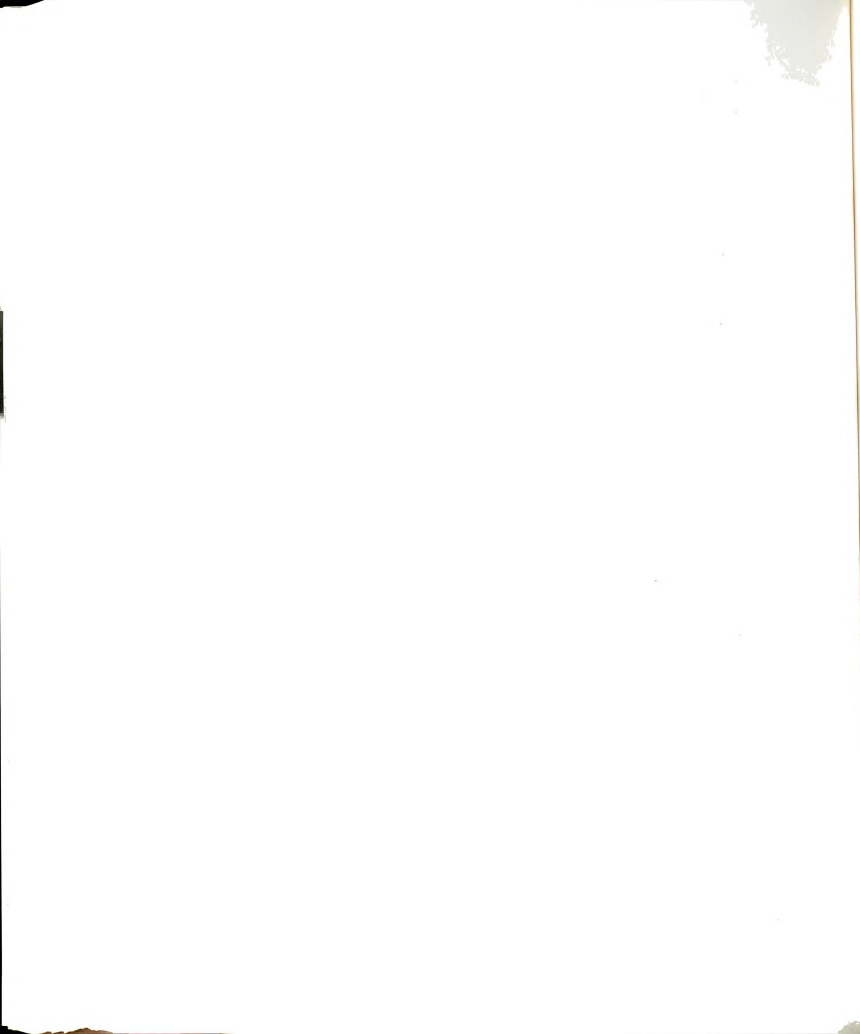


Table 3. Heroes arranged by age in three categories and military or nonmilitary experience

Category	Hero	Age	Military
Historical Fiction	John Wayland	20	no
	Raoul Coubert	37	yes
	Geoffrey Benteen	30+	yes
	Edelbert King	early-mid 20's	yes
	Robert Wayne	late 20's	yes
	Allen Lawrence	late 20's	yes
	Robert Galesworth	late 20's	yes
	Joseph Hayward	27	yes
	Arthur Shea	27	yes
	Tom Wyatt	24	yes
	Rene de Artigny	20-21	yes
	Geoffrey Carlyle	26	yes
	Steven Knox	20-21	yes
Western	Dan Kelleen	30's	yes
	Jack Keith	30	yes
	Buck Hamlin	26	yes
	Tom Winston	28	no
	Bob Hampton	45	yes
	Tom Shelby	25-26	yes
Mystery-Spy- Intrigue	Gordon Craig	27-28	yes
	Philip Dessaud	30	yes
	Robert Hollis	38	yes
	Jim Westcott	30's	no
	Philip Severn	27-28	yes
	Matt West	25-30	yes
	Don McGrath	17-18	no
	John Stephens	24	yes

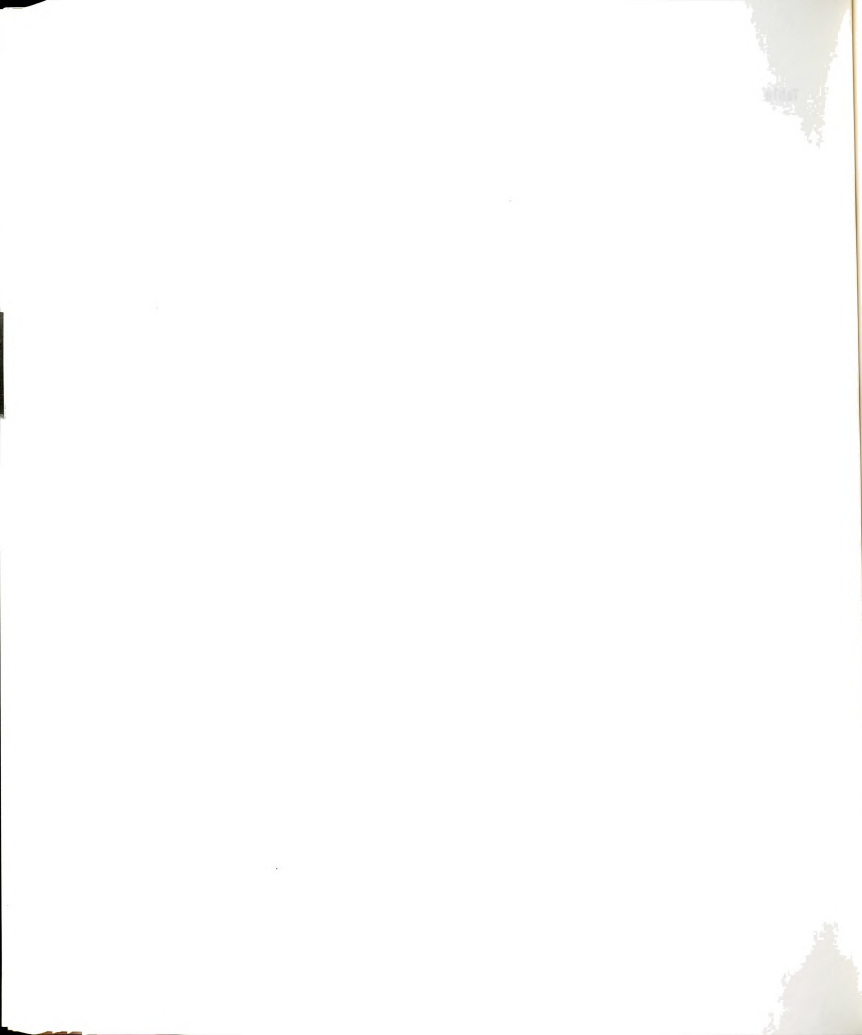


Table 4. Does character of hero develop and change significantly because of chronology of time book was written and/or category?

Western		Historical Fiction		Mystery-Spy-Intrigue	
Date	Title	Date	Title	Date	Title
1906	Bob Hampton of Placer	1904	When Wilderness was King	1908	The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel
1907	Beth Norvell	1904	My Lady of the North	1912	Gordon Craig
1910	Keith of the Border	1905	A Sword of the Old Frontier	1913	The Air Pilot
1912	Molly McDonald	1908	Prisoners of Chance	1916	Contraband
1922	Gift of the Desert	1909	My Lady of the South	1918	The Strange Case of Cavendish
		1911	My Lady of Doubt	1920	Mystery of the Silver Dagger
		1911	Love Under Fire	1922	The Case and the Girl
		1913	Maid of the Forest		
		1914	The Red Mist		
		1914	Shea of the Irish Brigade		
		1915	Beyond the Frontier		
		1917	The Devil's Own		
		1918	Wolves of the Sea		
<hr/>					
No specific category:		1910	Don McGrath		
Two non-fiction:		1905	Historic Illinois		
		1907	The Great Plains		

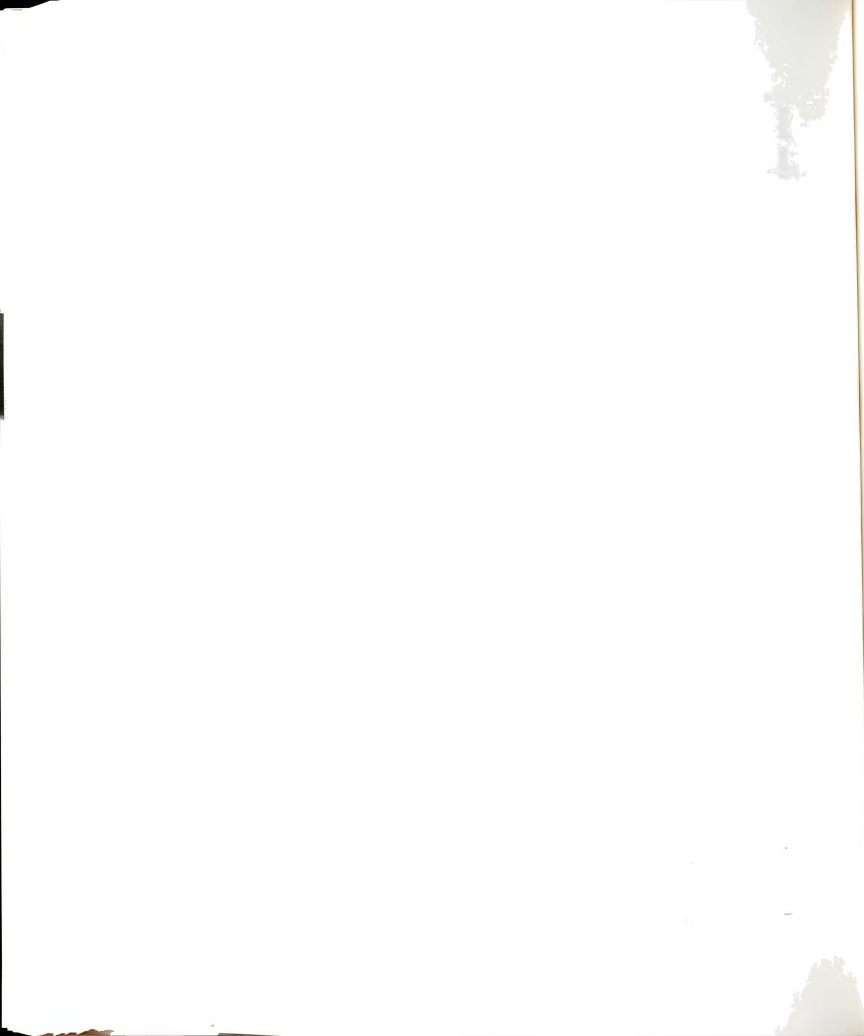


Table 5. Number of books published each year in each category

Date	Historical Fiction	Western	Mystery-Spy-Intrigue
1904	2	--	--
1905	1	--	--
1906	--	1	--
1907	--	1	--
1908	1	--	--
1909	1	--	--
1910	--	1	--
1911	2 (Civil War, Revolution)	--	--
1912	--	1	1
1913	1	--	1
1914	1	--	--
1915	1	--	--
1916	--	--	1
1917	1	--	--
1918	1	--	1
1919	--	1	--
1920	--	--	1
1921	--	--	--
1922	--	1	1

Nothing published in 1921

For five different years two books were published each year: 1904, 1911,
1912, 1913,
1918

Two nonfiction books were published in: 1905, 1907

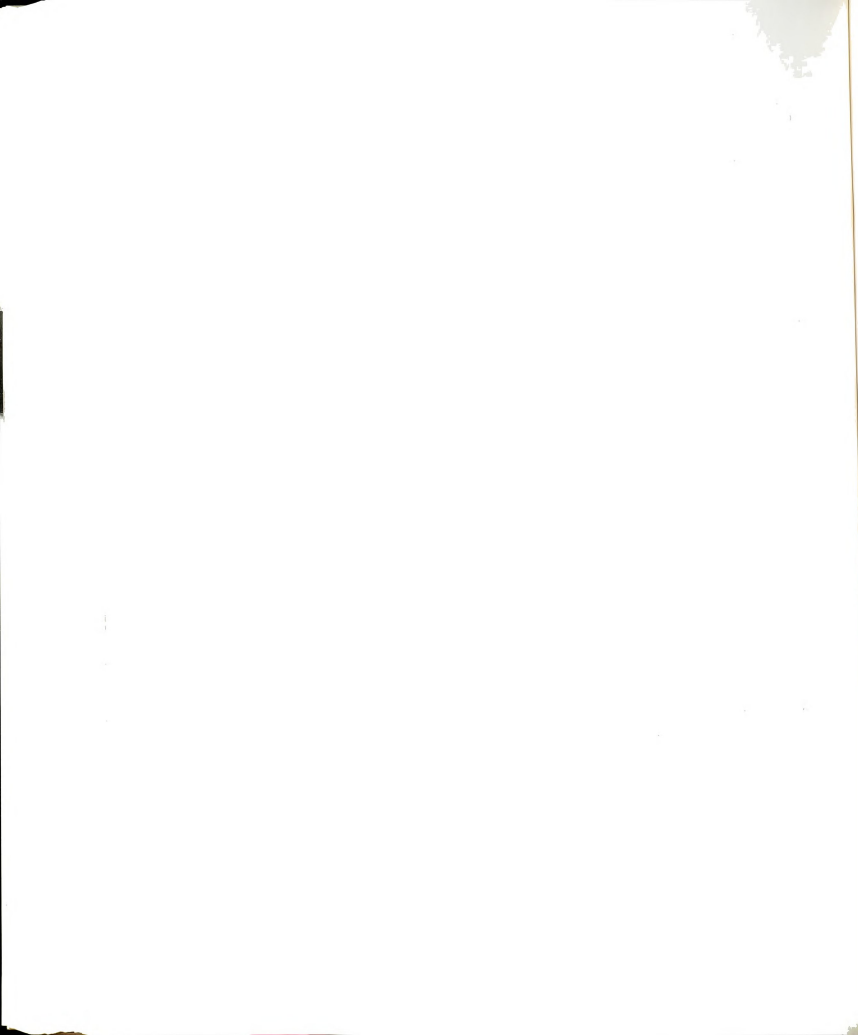


Table 6. Titles arranged by publication date.

Date	Title
1904	My Lady of the North When Wilderness was King
1905	A Sword of the Old Frontier
1906	Bob Hampton of Placer
1907	Beth Norvell
1908	The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel Prisoners of Chance
1909	My Lady of the South
1910	Keith of the Border Don McGrath
1911	My Lady of Doubt Love Under Fire
1912	Molly McDonald Gordon Craig
1913	Maid of the Forest The Air Pilot
1914	Shea of the Irish Brigade The Red Mist
1915	Beyond the Frontier
1916	Contraband
1917	The Devil's Own
1918	Wolves of the Sea The Strange Case of Cavendish
1919	Comrades of Peril
1920	The Mystery of the Silver Dagger
1921	--
1922	Gift of the Desert The Case and the Girl

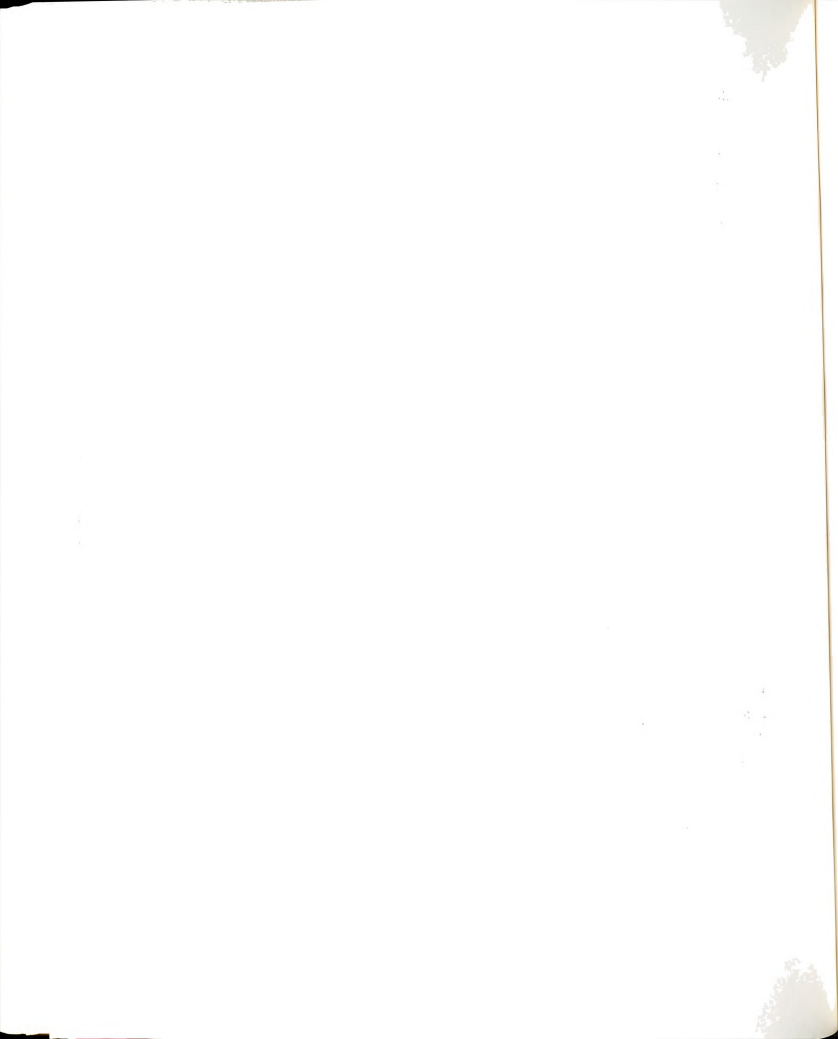


Table 7. Novels arranged by category and publication dates with explanation of hero, age and background

Date	Historical Fiction		Westerns		Mystery-Spy-Intrigue	
	Title	Description	Title	Description	Title	Description
1904	My Lady of the North	Little formal education, very young	--	--	--	--
	When Wilderness was King	Non-military, native born				
1905	A Sword of the Old Frontier	Almost 40 - little formal education, military, French	--	--	--	--
1906	--	--	Bob Hampton of Placer	Oldest hero - mid 40's, military, native, education?	--	--
1907	--	--	Beth Norvell	25-30, native, non-military, educated	--	--
1908	Prisoners of Chance	30's, educated military-now? native born of foreign parents	--	--	The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel	24, military
1909	My Lady of the	Military, native late 20's	--	--	--	--



Table 7. (Continued)

Date	Historical Fiction		Westerns		Mystery-Spy-Intrigue	
	Title	Description	Title	Description	Title	Description
1910	--	--	Keith of the Border	Military, 25-30 native, educated	Don McGrath	Non-military, little education
1911	My Lady of Doubt	Military, late 20's native born educated	--	--	--	--
	Love Under Fire	Military, native born, educated, late 20's				
1912	--	--	Molly McDonald	Military, 25-26 native, educated	Gordon Craig	once s.s., military, late 20's educated
1913	Maid of the Forest	Military, late 20's or 30's native?	--	--	The Air Pilot	French, military 30's - educated
1914	Shea of the Irish Brigade The Red Mist	Irish, military 30's Military, 20-30's native born	--	--	--	--
1915	Beyond the Frontier		--	--	--	--
1916	--	--	--	--	Contraband	late 20's, educated, once military

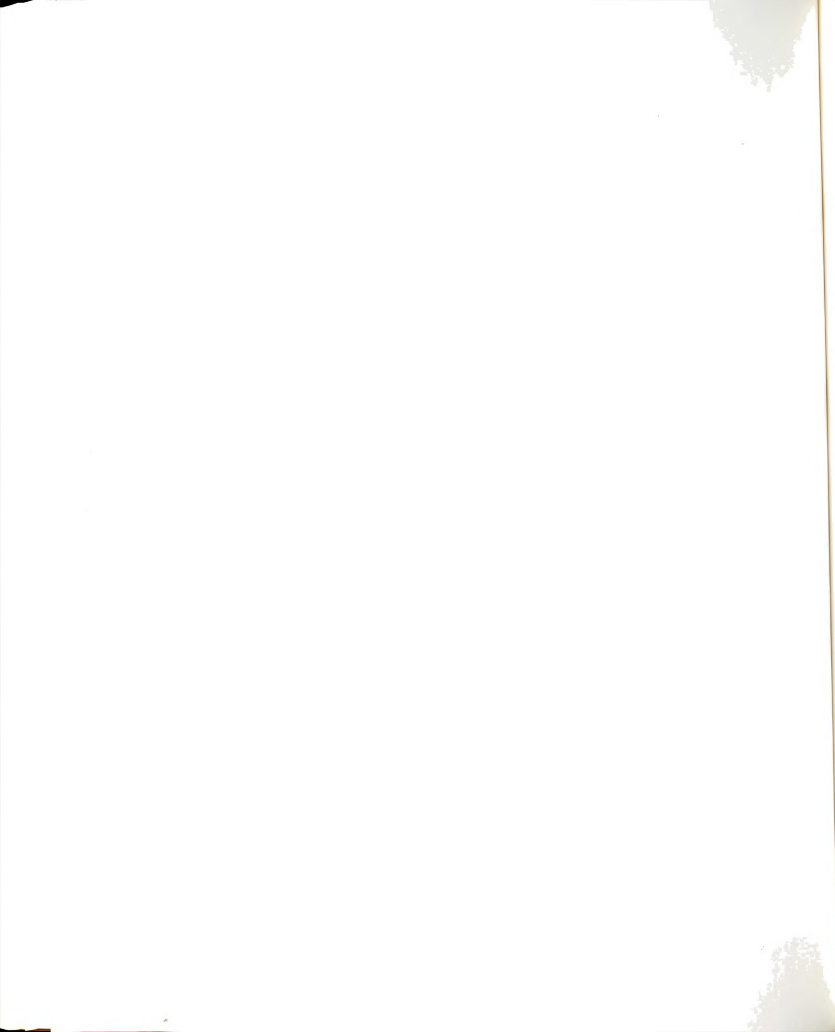
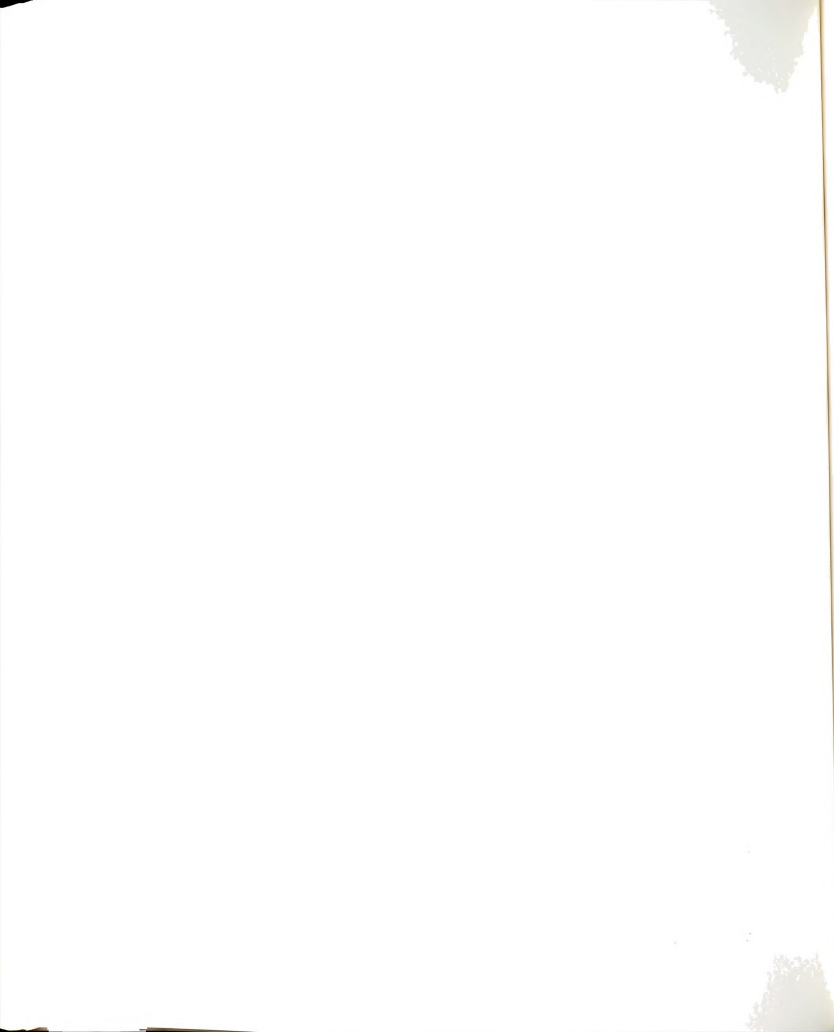


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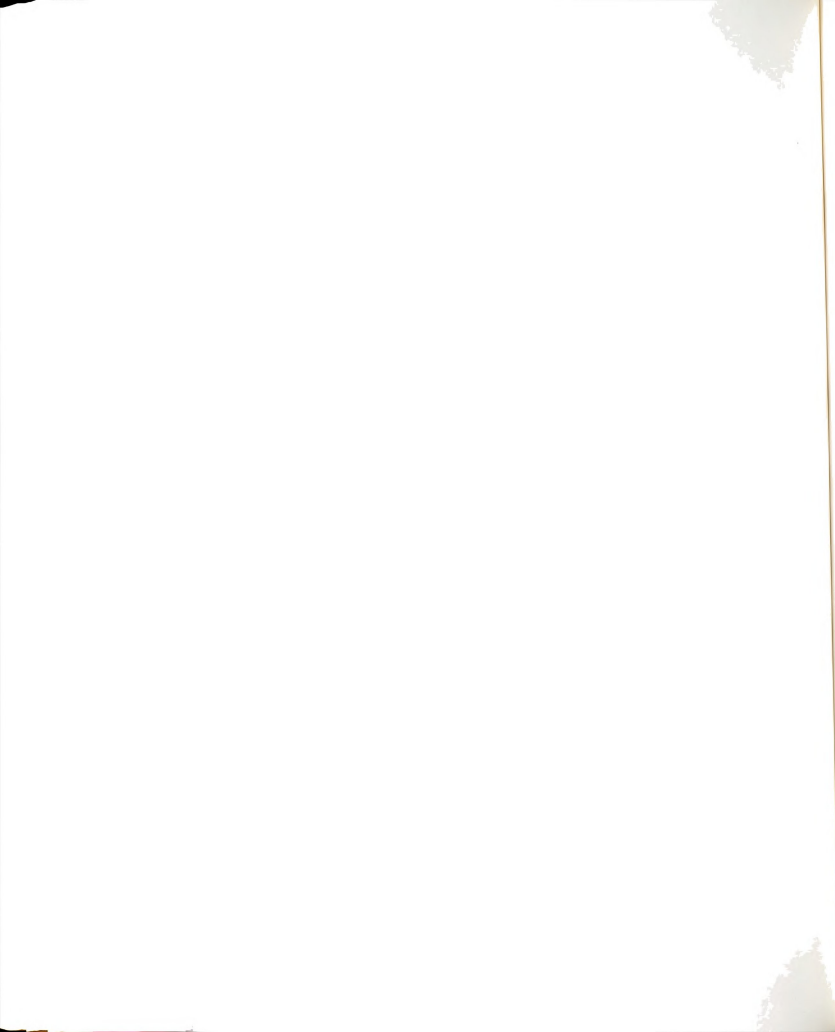
Date	Historical Fiction		Westerns		Mystery-Spy-Intrigue	
	Title	Description	Title	Description	Title	Description
1917	The Devil's Own	20's	--	--	--	--
1918	Wolves of the Sea	English, little education, 20's once military	--	--	The Strange Case of Cavendish	Non-military, 30's, educated
1919	--	--	Comrades of Peril	25-26, military native, some education	--	--
1920	--	--	--	--	The Mystery of the Silver Dagger	Once military ss, late 20's educated
1921	--	--	--	--	--	--
1922	--	--	Gift of the Desert	youngish-some education, once military	The Case and the Girl	Once military 25-30, educated

Non-Fiction						
1905	Historic Illinois					
1907	The Great Plains					



APPENDIX B

Synopses

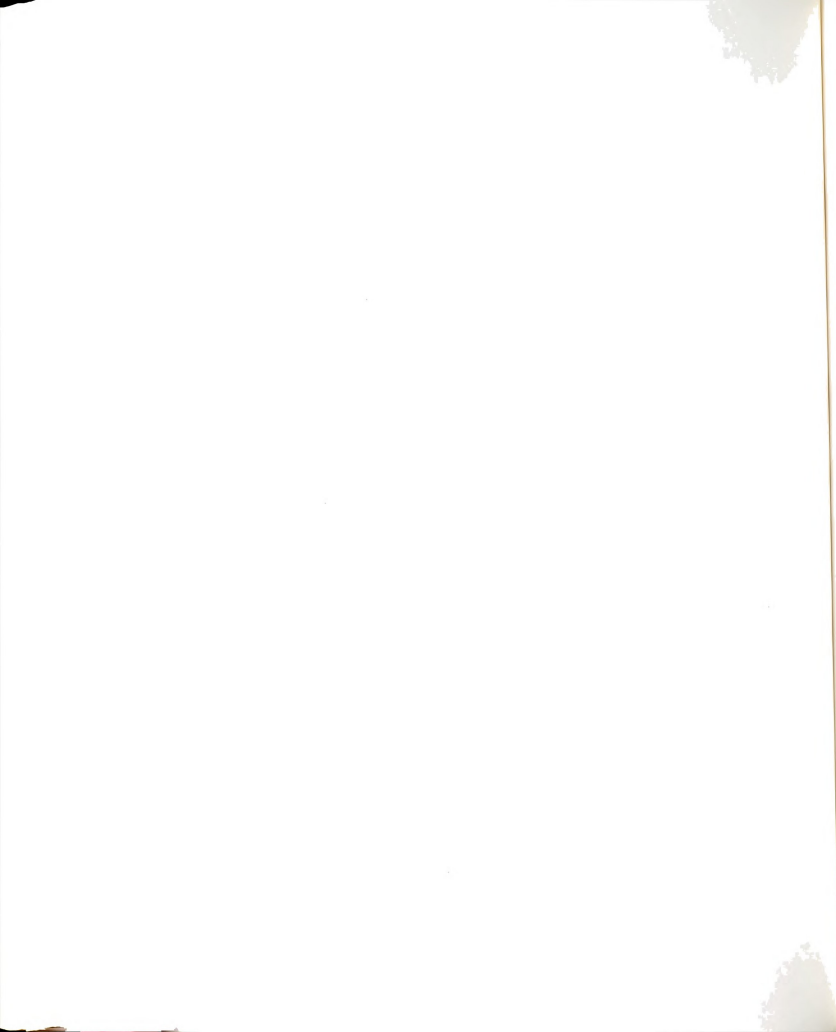


The Air Pilot

The time is circa 1910, just prior to World War I, and Lt. Philip Dessaud, who has been experimenting with the monoplane in France, is asked to come to America to demonstrate the aircraft. From the onset he is threatened by foreign agents from Germany, Russia, and other hostile countries. These agents first try to bribe him into letting them have the monoplane but when that does not work, they try to sabotage his plane and injure or kill him.

Early on in the tale Dessaud encounters a female reporter, Helen Probyns, who comes to interview Dessaud. Together they face the hostile foreign elements who threaten them and the monoplane he plans to demonstrate. Dessaud eventually kills the evil villain Brandt and Helen tells him he must leave Chicago until the truth about Brandt and his associates can be made public.

In the end Dessaud is vindicated and he marries Helen.



Beth Norvell

Ned Winston, while working in Colorado as a mining engineer, just by chance sees Beth Norvell and is curious why this obviously high class lovely young lady is part of a traveling theatrical group. Later, Winston discovers that Beth does have high society background but since the theater at that time was an unacceptable occupation for a "gentlewoman", even though talented, Beth is traveling under an assumed name. Later, due to a misunderstanding involving a mine claim, and a justifiable homicide of Beth's husband, Beth and Ned are separated. Later Beth and Ned are reunited for good, as Beth now knows that Ned did not kill her husband, Biff, but rather was at the scene of the accident.



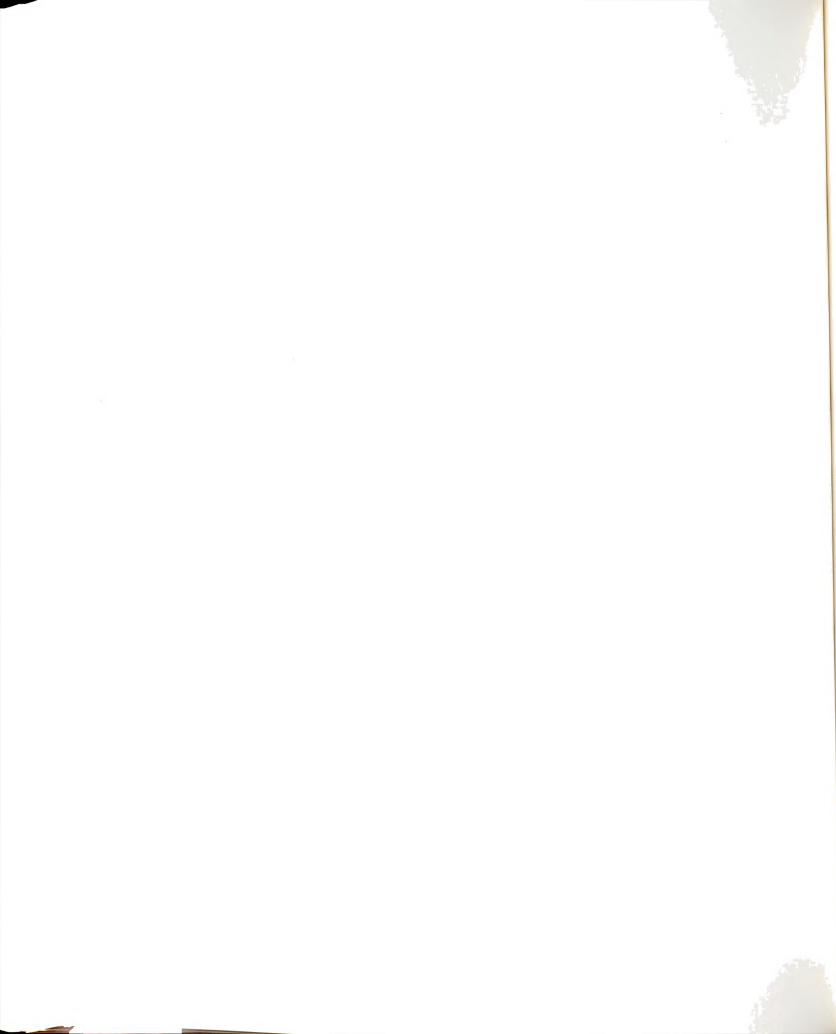
Beyond the Frontier (circa 1750)

This tale is subtitled as A Romance of Early Days in the Middle West. This is the story of the heroine, Adele la Chesnayne, who is forced into an arranged marriage with a scoundrel and business partner of her uncle's, named Francois Cassion. Adele at first refuses to marry her Uncle Hugo's associate but finally she realizes there is no way to avoid the marriage.

Just prior to her marriage to Cassion Adele encounters once again Rene de Artigny with whom she fell in love some years before. Since Cassion needs a guide through the Illinois territory on his way to visit Governor La Barre, who is Frontenac's replacement near Fort St. Louis, Artigny is selected for the job. Artigny and Adele reestablish their friendship and Artigny promises he will help her in trying to keep Cassion away from her even though he is legally her husband.

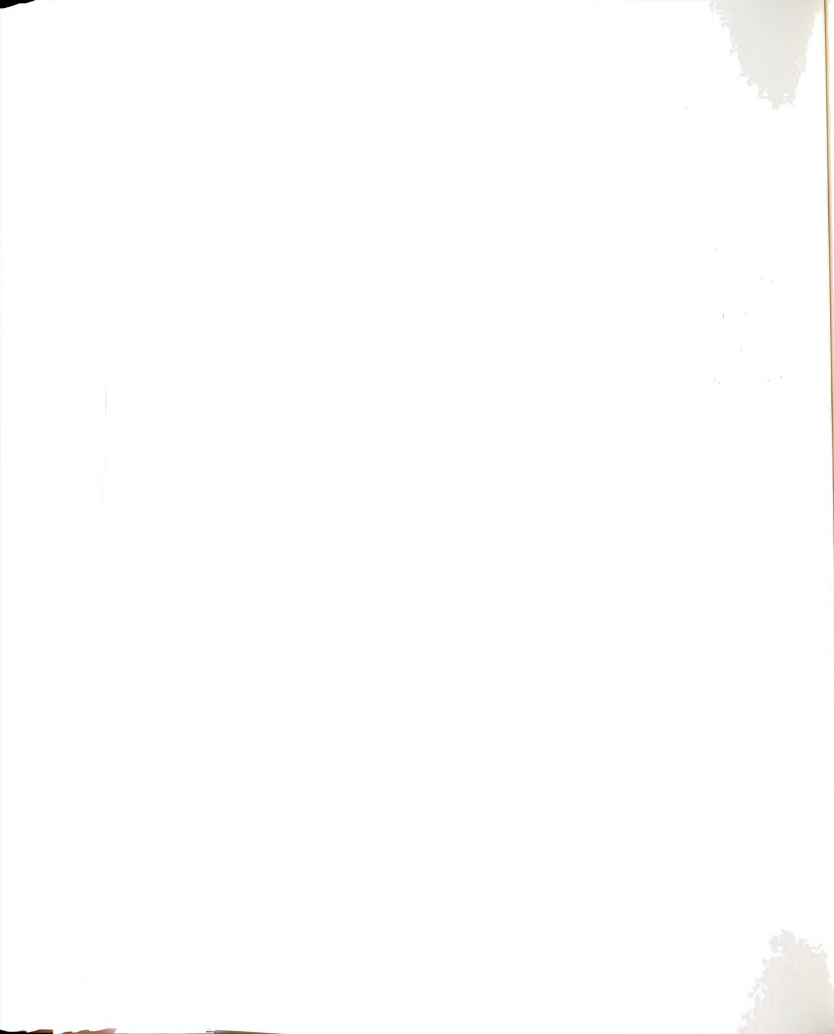
As the story unfolds it is revealed that Cassion and LaBarre have a scheme to keep control of territory near Fort St. Louis, by mutilation of official records, keeping Frontenac from returning to America and discrediting La Salle at all costs. Artigny wants to prevent such from happening as he was La Salle's lieutenant on numerous previous journeys here in the New World.

At the conclusion of the tale Adele learns that she is an heiress to much property in France via her late father and that her Uncle Hugo hoped to gain hold of it via her marriage to Cassion and the discrediting of La Salle, Frontenac and Adele's late father. When Cassion is confronted with the evidence against him, he bolts from the fort and is killed by a sentry. This turn of events leaves Adele and Rene free to love and marry at last.



Bob Hampton of Placer

Robert Hampton Nolan seeks the man, Murphy, who had killed a fellow officer by Hampton is falsely accused and as a result is dishonorably discharged from the army and spends ten years in prison. In the course of the story Bob is reunited with his daughter who does not realize until the end of the tale that Bob is her father. Bob finds Murphy and kills him during a fight that precedes the Battle of Little Big Horn.



The Case and the Girl (circa 1917)

Matthew West, the hero, has recently returned from military service as an army engineer. On a whim he responds to an ad and allows himself to be drawn into a mysterious setup in which he will pose as Natalie Coolidge's (the heroine) fiance and help her solve the mystery of her double.

Soon Natalie is to inherit many millions from her late father, but her uncle Percival is acting strangely and Natalie wonders if it has something to do with her double who keeps popping up in public places, especially banks.

Matt is attracted to Natalie and promises to help her solve the mystery. Shortly thereafter Uncle Percival is found dead, first thought to be a suicide, then murder.

While trying to solve the murder, Matt discovers several things: there is a double -- in fact, she is Natalie's twin, there is a plot to bilk Natalie of her fortune planned by Uncle Percival and a former associate Jim Hobart.

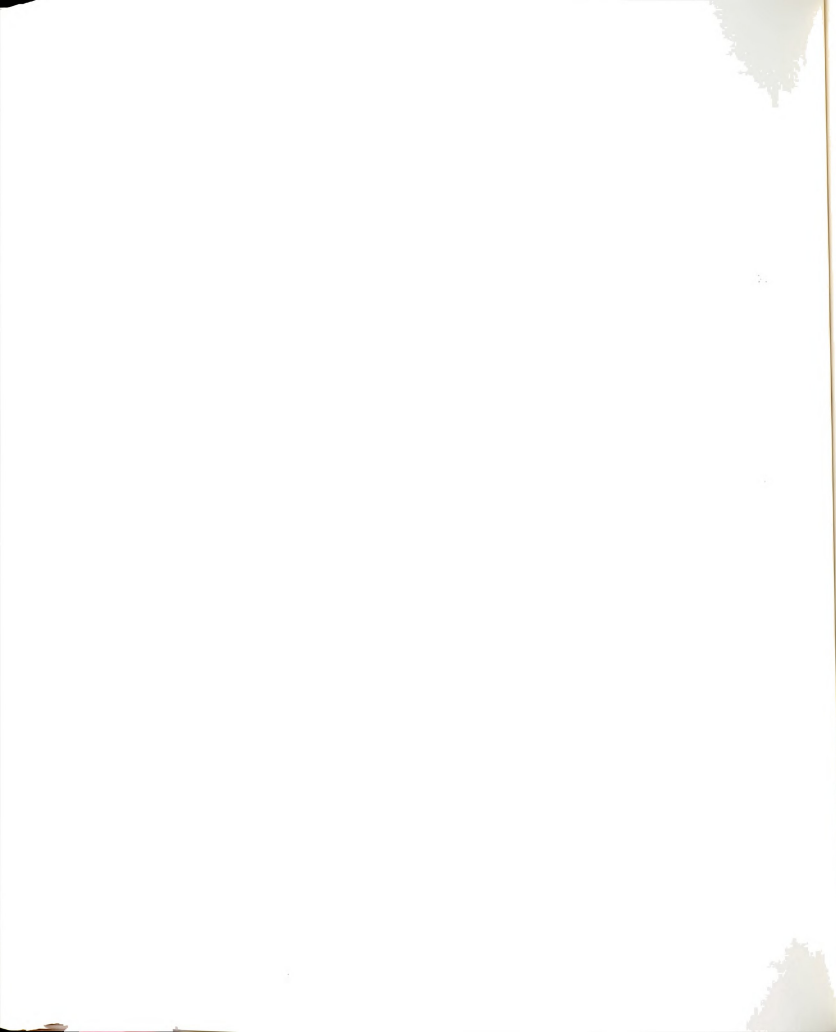
The story ends as Hobart confesses that he murdered Percival because of a fight over the scheme to defraud Natalie. Natalie is introduced to her twin, Delia, and all is well. Whether Matt will marry Natalie is left to the reader's imagination.

Comrades of Peril (circa 1890)

The setting is the West near a Sioux reservation. Tom Shelby, the hero, has come west after a stint in the army. He is trying to redefine his life and is somewhat of a drifter at this point.

He meet Olga Carlyn early on in the story and falls in love with her. There is a mystery concerning her father, Dad Calkins -- is he her real father? After Calkins dies, the chivalrous Shelby marries Olga as he fears for her safety so near to an Indian reservation plus there are some unsavory Mexicans also.

Together they pursue the mystery of Olga's background and the "suicide" of Dad Calkins.



Contraband (circa 1913)

This tale is subtitled a romance of the North Atlantic and tells of how the hero, Robert Hollis, a seaman bachelor of 37, gets involved in what he believes is a pleasure cruise aboard a friend's yacht. The time is 1913 and World War I is about to explode. Once aboard the yacht and considerable distance from shore Hollis realizes that this is more than just a pleasure cruise as the yacht is contacted by a German vessel. Hollis is suddenly aware that his host and the others are running contraband munition to the enemy, Germany.

Also, on board is Vera Carrington, a relative of the host. Vera is the heroine and she and Hollis meet and eventually fall in love.

Eventually the crooks have a falling out and someone sets fire to the ship and the munitions explode the ship. However, Hollis, Vera and some crew members manage to flee in a dinghy. They encounter a seemingly abandoned ship and go aboard to find that every one on board is dead, electrocuted, and a mystery treasure chest is found hanging halfway out of the ship on a pulley. Hollis convinces the remaining crew from the yacht to head for England and settle the treasure in the courts there. As the story ends Hollis and Vera decide to share their portion of the loot with the fame of a crew member who perished on the voyage.



The Devil's Own (circa 1832)

The Black Hawk war is just surfacing as Steven Knox, the hero, sets out to rejoin his regiment near St. Louis. He witnesses a rigged card game in which Judge Beaucaire loses his plantation and his servants to a riverboat gambler, Joe Kirby, and Beaucaire dies of a heart attack. Kirby, the villain, knows that the Judge's daughter (for his second marriage, Eloise, and his granddaughter, Rene, live on the plantation. Kirby knows also, as does Knox, that Rene is the product of the Judge's son and a mulatto servant, thus Rene is legally part of the property, rather than co-inheritor with Eloise.

Knox knows Kirby is a vicious scoundrel and plans to marry Eloise. Also he plan to sell Rene along with the rest of the property. Thus Knox sets out to aid the girls. He helps Rene escape to free territory while trying to help Eloise get away from Kirby. Knox and Eloise run into problems with the Black Hawk Indians. As the story concludes Knox along with a military companion, Kennedy, fight a large group of Indians. Miraculously Knox survives as he is struck on the head and the savages leave him for dead. Thus, Eloise reappears after being separated from Knox during the skirmish and the two leave the scene forever.

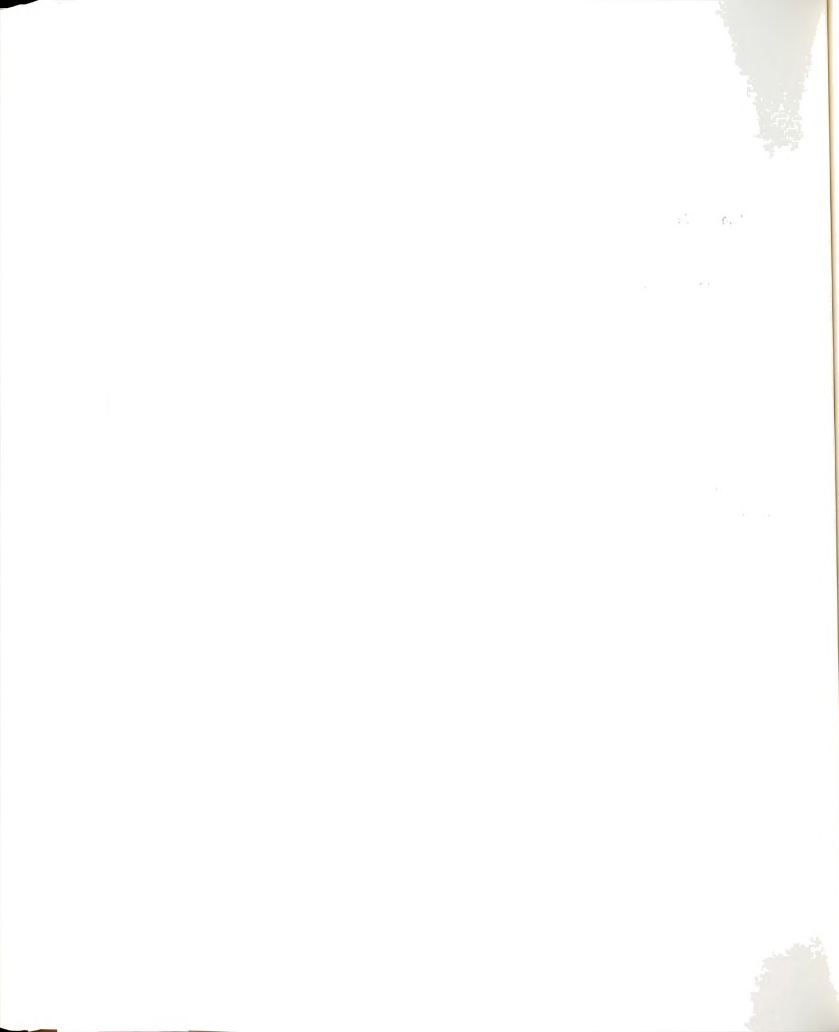
Don MacGrath (circa 1890)

Don MacGrath, the young hero, runs away from his adopted father to strike out on his own as his life had become unbearable due to abuse. Don soon encounters another drifter, Mark Dean, who has suffered setbacks himself. Dean, although well-educated and once well-to-do left his former life as an engineer and husband and took up acting in road shows.

Early on in the tale, Don finds a valuable pearl in a mussel and Dean sells it to a gem merchant. Then Dean determines to purchase a nearly defunct showboat troupe and manage it. It is then that Don meets Laila, the heroine, and the daughter of the showboat's captain.

Adventures ensue involving the gem merchant, river pirates, and Tom MacGrath, Don's adopted father.

At the end of the story, Don has discovered that he is really the son of people of importance, the Masons, who had believed Don was lost to them forever as he had been stolen away as a baby. Dean is reunited with Lucille, his wife, and Laila becomes a well-known actress.



Gift of the Desert (circa 1918)

Deborah Meredith, the heroine, accepts a job in Arizona as nurse to Mrs. Meager who is bedridden. The pleasant situation soon becomes unpleasant as Mrs. Meager's vicious stepson, Robert, appears at the ranch to claim it and force Deborah to marry him. He makes Deborah a virtual prisoner and succeeds in marrying her against her will figuring that she cannot escape as the ranch is so isolated. Deborah does escape and is aided by the hero, Dan Kellen of the border patrol and a cavalry captain.

As the story evolves, Meager is involved in illegal gun running, robbery and trying to find the spoils of 50 years of robbery of old Alvara who had hidden his loot in a cave.

The tale concludes with the death of Meager and his associates in the case. Deborah and Kellen are reunited and are in love.



Gordon Craig, Soldier of Fortune

Craig, temporarily without steady employment after a hitch in the military, becomes involved in a scheme to settle an estate. Craig is to impersonate a Philip Henley, who cannot be found at that time. Craig bears a likeness to Henley, thus two unscrupulous lawyers ask Craig to be a part in the scheme which on the surface appears to be harmless but in reality is devious.

Since Henley was married, Craig must come up with a "wife" and how convenient this is, since just the previous evening Craig had saved one Viola Bernard from being accosted. Viola goes along with the scheme, but for a reason, at that point not known to Craig, she is the real wife of Philip Henley.

The pair goes to the Henley family estate to collect the inheritance and there they encounter a malicious pair, a mulatto housekeeper, Sallie, and an evil man who turns out to be Philip Henley's half-brother and Sallie is Charles Henley's mother.

The problem of the inheritance is resolved as 1) Viola tells Craig who she really is, 2) Craig determines to drop his impersonation and solve the case as himself, 3) Philip Henley is found dead after escaping jail, 4) Charles is killed in a fall after a fight with Craig, and 5) Viola and Craig live happily ever after on her share of the estate as Philip's widow.

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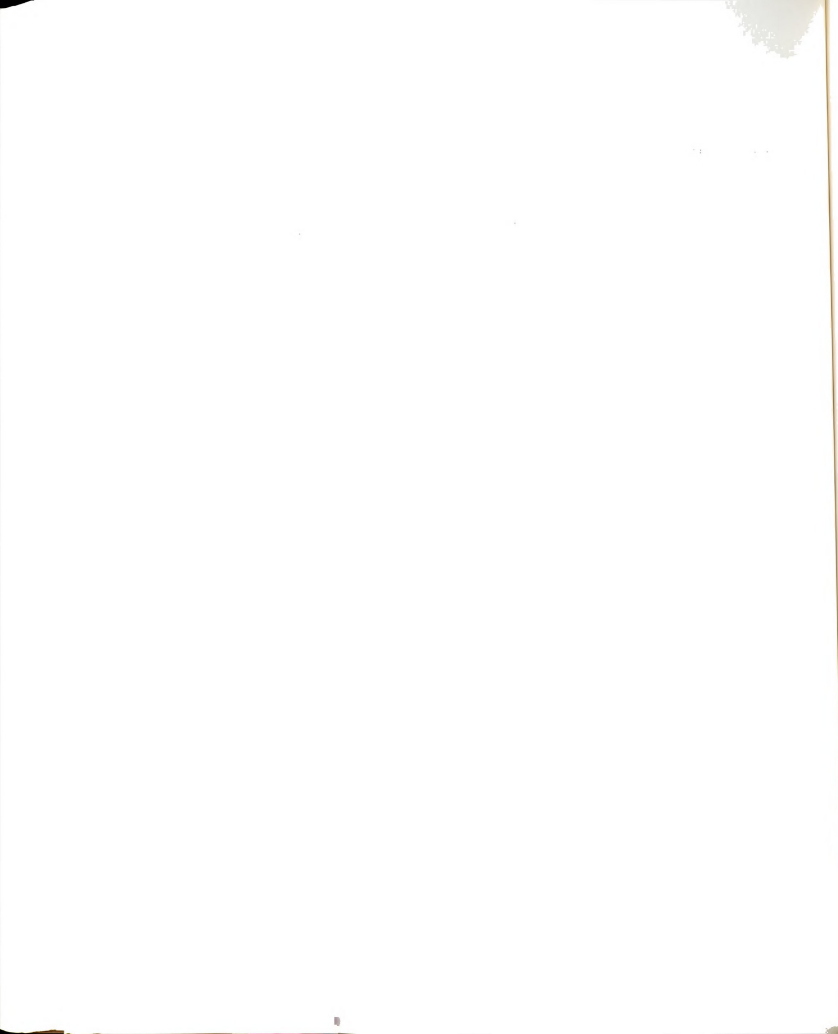
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Keith of the Border (circa 1874)

Jack Keith, the hero, drifted to the Plains after the Civil War had divested him of everything. After he had tried many jobs he became a transient plainsman. One day, on his way to Carson City, he happened on a wagon that had been ambushed and the occupants killed apparently by Indians. Keith picks up some items including a locket which he hopes will aid in identifying the murdered man. When Keith arrives in Carson City he is arrested by the marshal as a sinister man named Black Bart has accused him of the wagon murders.

The rest of the tale concerns Keith's efforts to absolve himself of guilt and solve the mystery of the locket and the picture in it. This tale is full of coincidences such as Neb, one of Keith's aunt's former slaves is lodged in the jail as is Keith and Keith's recollection of the name of the woman whose picture is in the locket he found on the dead man's body.

The tale eventually includes a case of mistaken identity as the heroine, Hope Waite, daughter of the dead man in the wagon is mistaken for Christie MacLaire, a music hall singer, the daughter of Black Bart, alias Bartlett Hawley. As a result, Hawley abducts Hope not realizing his mistake at that point as it had been years since he had seen Christie, his daughter. Before the story ends it is revealed that Hope and Christie had the same mother, thus the resemblance. However, the reason that Hawley had accused Keith was to cover up the truth plus there was money also involved as a result of gambling. The story ends as Keith and Hawley duel it out in the desert; Hawley is killed and Keith is badly wounded. Keith is saved, however, by Dr. Fairbain's skill and Hope's care.



Love Under Fire (circa 1862)

Union Lt. Robert Galesworth, the hero, on his scouting assignment inside Confederate limits, overhears a conversation between two Southern soldiers in which dispatches for Beauregard are discussed. Galesworth determines to follow the one called "Billie" not realizing that this Billie is a girl, Willifred Gray, who is involved in such work in order to do her part for the Confederacy. Galesworth discovers this after he hitches a ride on Billie's wagon. Temporarily dis-oriented because of being in unfamiliar territory, Galesworth makes a deal with Billie that whichever side they encounter first each will protect the other for the time being. Galesworth finds himself a prisoner shortly thereafter after the two encounter other Confederates. Billie intervenes when the villain, Le Gaire, a Confederate officer, challenges Galesworth's presence wearing a Federal uniform, especially as he sees Galesworth as a treat to his marriage to Billie. After a fight with Le Gaire, Galesworth, with Billie's help, escapes.

As the story unfolds, Galesworth returns the favor Billie did for him as he gets involved in a duel with Le Gaire over Billie. Le Gaire cheats and then his entire shady past is revealed as he is murdered by his son by his quadroon mistress.

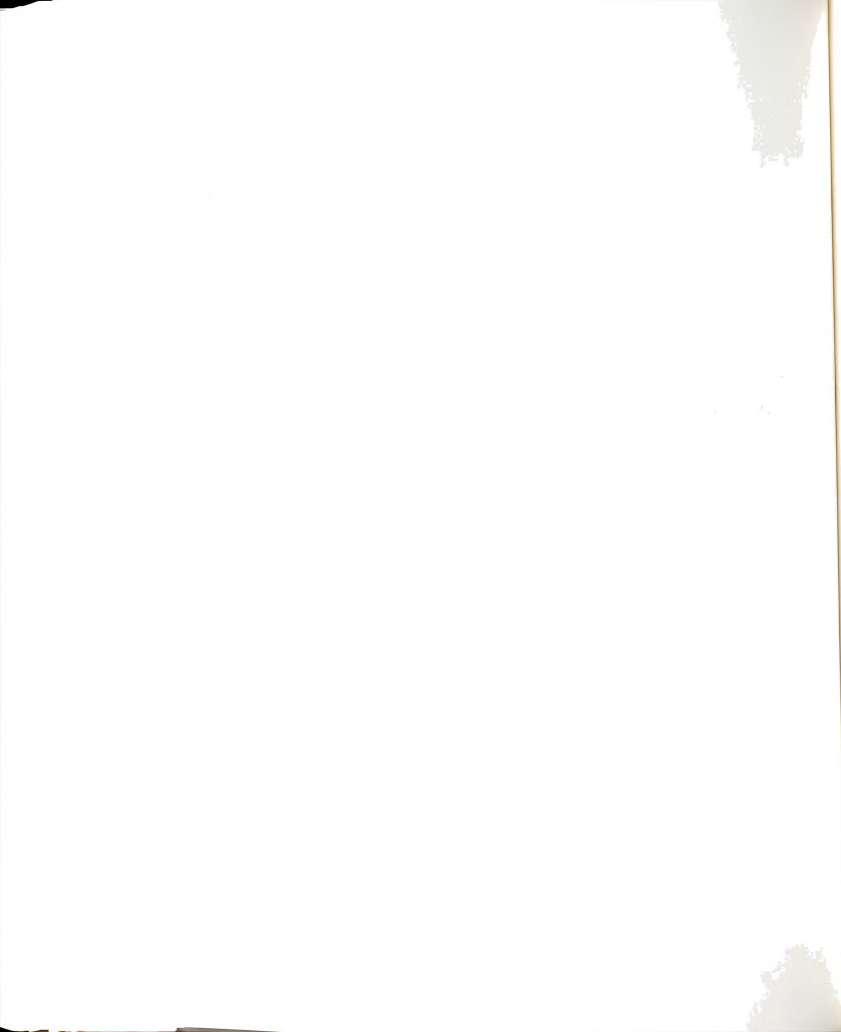
The story concludes with Galesworth being wounded during a skirmish between the renegade forces of Le Gaire and Galesworth's troop. Billie reappears after vanishing earlier and she vows to nurse Galesworth back to health as she realizes she loves him, although he is the enemy.

Maid of the Forest (circa 1800)

The hero, Joseph Hayward, formerly an ensign in the Continental Navy, is now a guide and scout. Early on in the tale he meets the villain, Simon Girty with a bad reputation, and the heroine, Rene D'Auvray, who is part Indian and French. Rene asks Hayward permission to accompany him on his mission as messenger to the Wyandots (but Hayward refuses) and an American general St. Clair near Sandusky. The Wyandots must be convinced to remain peace along the frontiers of Ohio and Illinois but they are threatening total war with the American military and settlers because one of the important Indians, Wa-jee-tee-tah is supposedly a prisoner of the Americans at Fort Harmar.

Hayward, his aide, Brady, and party depart the fort. On the journey Hayward and Brady find the body of Rene's father, Captain D'Auvray, a Frenchman, in a cabin. Shortly thereafter Rene appears, having accompanied Girty who had been detained at Fort Harmar in order to give Hayward and his group a head start. Girty is not to be trusted as he will deal with whichever side offers the best reward, thus the general at the fort wanted Hayward to have the advantage of delivering to the Indians alliance first.

As the tale unfolds Hayward finds he has a double, Picaud, a villainess scoundrel who claims to be married to Rene. Also he has murdered Rene's father to incite war between the Indians and Americans. Rene and Hayward enter Jules Lappin's, a Shawnee leader,



camp to save Brady, Hayward's aide and a bloody fight results but they all escape, even Brady who is mortally wounded.

By the story's end Rene and Hayward reach St. Clair with news concerning the alliance of Indian tribes who incited by the British intend to harass and kill the American settlers along the frontier of Illinois and Ohio. St. Clair promises reinforcements will be sent to aid the Americans on the frontier. Hayward declares his love for Rene and they decide to wed.

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Molly McDonald

Since all is quiet on the Great Plains, Molly is to spend her summer vacation with her father, Major Daniel McDonald at the remote Army post, Fort Devere, southwest of Fort Dodge, where he is the post commander. The time was late spring 1868 when the Major sent the invitation to his daughter but by mid June the Indians in the Great Plains were hostile both against the white man. Since the Major cannot contact Molly in time to cancel her trip he enlists the help of Sergeant Brick Hamlin from nearby Fort Union. Hamlin, who had fought for the Confederacy, had reenlisted after the war and was assigned to the Plains area. Brick who turns out to be the hero of the story, has had much more experience than the Major since this is the Major's first command in the far West.

Brick is assigned to go to Fort Ripley near Kansas City, Missouri, to pick up Molly and escort her through now dangerous Indian territory since it would not be safe for her to travel by stage.

Unfortunately, Brick Hamlin does not arrive in time, and Molly has taken a stage to Dodge.

Brick Hamlin meets the heroine, Molly, as the stage rolls toward Dodge and just after Hamlin has stopped the stage to let the two drivers and the occupants know of Indian troubles ahead. Hamlin joins the stage as his pony is exhausted. Shortly thereafter they are attacked by Indians, but eventually escape and make it to Fort Devere but not without much trouble.



Later in the story some of Brick's past is revealed and the tale of his supposed cowardice during the Civil War. Then things are complicated further when a Lieutenant Gaskins accuses Brick of trying to kill him, which, of course, is untrue.

A bit later after Brick is absolved of trying to kill Gaskins he encounters a woman from his past, Mrs. Vera Le Fevre, now Mrs. DuPont. It was her husband who had said Brick was a coward during battle and led to his dishonorable discharge.

As the story progresses the reader learns that Vera DuPont is posing as Molly's cousin and that she and her current husband are involved in a scheme that involves the Major and Molly. As a result, the Major is murdered and Molly disappears, thus Brick feels obligated to find her. The search is a treacherous one involving a blizzard, the deaths of two soldiers and problems with unseen persons shooting at Brick and his remaining comrade. Finally Brick finds an associate of DuPont's and discovers that DuPont and LeFevre are the same man. LeFevre, alias DuPont, had lured the Major and Molly out of Fort Devere with false orders and a huge payroll. DuPont aided by Indians kills Major McDonald and carries off Molly.

Finally, Brick finds Molly, and with great difficulty they struggle their way back to civilization. Luckily they meet up with some of Custer's men and by the end of the story Brick is absolved of blame concerning cowardice and Brick kills DuPont during a gun fight a bit later after Molly is made safe. Brick is wounded in a skirmish with Indians while fighting with Custer but is nursed back to health by his beloved Molly and they plan to marry.

My Lady of Doubt (circa 1776)

The hero, Major Allen Lawrence, is sent as a military observer by Washington to infiltrate British lines in Philadelphia and learn what he can about Sir Henry Clinton's numbers, munitions and any point of weakness in the defenses of the city. Lawrence poses as a British officer, Edgar Fortesque, which allows him freedom to move within enemy territory.

Early on Lawrence, disguised as Fortesque, saves the heroine, Claire Mortimer, from being trampled by horses. She soon recognizes him as Lawrence. She does not disclose his true identity to the British or Loyalists; however, Captain Grant, the villain, to whom Claire is engaged, is suspicious and determines to capture "Fortesque." At this point Lawrence realizes that his cover is blown so he returns to Continental lines with Grant in pursuit.

As the story unfolds Lawrence is uncertain if Claire is loyalist, and a British spy, or patriot but by the end of the tale he realizes that she is a patriot as she aids Lawrence in eluding the British and loyalists on several occasions. She kept him in doubt because her father is a Loyalist, but her brother is a Patriot and she loved them both.

The tale ends as the villain, Grant, is found to be a traitor to the British although he pretended loyalty and he is selling secrets to the highest bidder. He is killed during a skirmish at the Mortimer home. Claire and Lawrence are reunited after the skirmish.

My Lady of the North (circa 1863)

Captain Wayne, the hero, is dispatched by General Lee, with a message for Lt. General Longstreet concerning troop advancement. Wayne and his aide must go into enemy lines in order to deliver the message which makes the mission dangerous.

Early on in their journey the mission is complicated as the two encounter two Union soldiers who are escorting a lady named Edith Brennan. Wayne pretends to be a Union officer and as a result is asked to escort Mrs. Brennan to her destination. This extra duty causes extra problems for Wayne as enemy troops are not the only enemy in the forest in which they travel, since renegades loyal to no one abound. One encounter involves a savage dog in a cabin where they stop to rest. A short time later Wayne and Edith run into Frank Brennan, Edith's brother-in-law and a Union officer and Wayne is made captive.

Eventually Wayne escapes his captors disguised as a Union colonel and aided by Edith.

The remainder of the story is a game of cat and mouse as Wayne eludes Brennan.

The tale ends with the end of the war and Wayne wondering what he will do now. Also he thinks of Edith and what has become of her. Then all of a sudden, Edith reappears as Wayne leaves the Appomattox area. Edith reveals that she is a widow and is free to become Wayne's wife.

My Lady of the South (circa 1861)

This is a tale of the Civil War in which the hero, Sergeant Elbert King, a wounded Union soldier first encounters the heroine, Jean Denslow, at her home, and a short time later marries her to save her from a forced marriage with a Southern officer, Lt. Calvert Dunn, whom she does not love.

Here he learns also of a planned movement by currently victorious troops against Rosecrans' retreating troops. His effort to warn his army of impending danger earns him a lieutenancy plus his marriage to Jean puts him into an awkward and uncertain relationship with her.

The story unfolds a strange feud in which Jean's family is involved. All is resolved at the tale's end as Jean determines to stay wed to her Union husband in spite of her Southern loyalites.



The Last Voyage of the Donna Isabel (circa 1900)

John Stephens, the hero, finds himself footloose and in danger after involvement in a South American uprising. He must avoid detection by Chilean forces and yet the U.S. government refuses to shelter him on any sea vessel for fear of international problems. Thus when John sees an opportunity to board the Esmeralda as crew chief and get out of the way for awhile until the situation between Chile and the U.S. cools off he does so.

Shortly thereafter John encounters the heroine, Doris (Lady) Darlington, her husband, Lord Darlington, her mother and her maid, Celeste. Later Stephens discovers that Doris was forced into an arranged marriage and that Lord Darlington has Chilean connections.

As the tale unfolds all the characters end up aboard the Esmeralda and the vessel heads for the Antarctic in search of the sunken treasure ship Donna Isabel. John initially does not know of the intended purpose of the voyage as he thinks he is taking the ship to Peru for a sum, 5000 American dollars in gold.

The story's high point is the finding of the Donna Isabel and the attempt by the greedy crew and others recover the treasure.

The attempt is not successful as the Donna Isabel is smashed by the icebergs, the Ismeralda goes down and only Stephens, Doris, Celeste and two crew members escape in a lifeboat. They are later rescued by a passing vessel. Of course, John and Doris are free to marry now as her husband was killed during the rush for the treasure.



The Mystery of the Silver Dagger

Philip Severn, the hero, while waiting for reassignment as a secret agent for the U.S. happens upon a curious Oriental box in a curio shop and buys it. Later he discovers a message written in Spanish hidden in a false bottom in the box. The message piques his curiosity and he set out to solve the mystery of the message and the origins of the box. Severn discovers a subversive plot involving anti-American elements who seek to supply Chile with arms and then overthrow the existing pro-American government.

As the story unfolds, Severn meets the heroine, Marie Gessler, who wears a silver dagger pin in her hat. Later, Severn is uncertain as to Marie's loyalty to America as he finds the dagger pin at the scene of a murder. Severn eventually meets up with assorted villains, Captain Alva, Gaspar Wine and Ivan Waldron. Severn assumes the identity of Harry Daly in order to get next to the plotters.

At the end of the story it is revealed that Marie is really Helen Longdale and is also working for the government as a secretary for an influential man named Krantz. Helen (Marie) acts as a go-between for Alva (the Chilian) and Krantz, the U.S. government representative.

The story ends as Helen reveals her part in the affair to Severn and thus the reader is filled in also.

The Red Mist

The Red Mist is a tale of Civil War strife that takes place during the Civil War mainly in the Virginia territory. The hero, Sergeant Tom Wyatt, a Rebel, poses as a Federal officer, Charles Raymond, in order to infiltrate Union lines and gain information on troop buildup for General Stonewall Jackson.

As the story progresses Wyatt (Raymond) stumbles onto a childhood friend, Noreen Harwood, and in order to save her from an arranged marriage with the villain's son, Anse Cowan, Wyatt marries Noreen himself.

The story involves many close calls for the young couple as they must flee from the villain, Ned Cowan, who is trying to get a deed to the Harwood estate, and get revenge on Wyatt and Noreen. Also Wyatt must complete his "spying" mission for Jackson and return without being captured and shot as a spy.

As in all such tales there are many close calls but in the end John's mission is accomplished and the couple is reunited. Tom and Noreen declare their love for each other and decide to remain wed.

Shea of the Irish Brigade (circa 1730-40)

Arthur Shea, although Irish, is a soldier for French during the reign of Louis XV. Shea, fearing revenge, flees his regiment after "killing" a fellow officer, d'Enville. Early in the tale Shea encounters d'Enville's sister, the heroine, Camille d'Enville, who has been captured by Austrian and English troops. Shea helps Camille escape but in doing so loses her as she rides away without him.

The tale becomes fraught with intrigue as Shea hides in an abandoned castle and encounters a bunch of thieves, a prisoner in a dungeon, a hideous dwarf who is in cohorts with a powerful French duke de Saule who is close to Louis.

The story ends as de Saule is revealed as a traitor and Shea discovers that he did not kill, but merely wounded Camille's brother. However, a sword fight between the thieves and Shea aided by d'Enville costs d'Enville his life. Camille, who had been abducted by the thieves and detained at the castle is reunited with Shea and the two decide to wed.



The Strange Case of Cavendish

Frederick Cavendish, disgusted with the wild life of his cousin, John, decides to disinherit him. John is frantic at the prospect and urged on by two of his "friends", Celeste La Rue, a dancer, and Patrick Enright, a crooked lawyer, goes to Fred's home to steal the will Fred had made disinheriting him. While at the apartment, John strikes a man he assumes is Fred but it is really Tom Burke but the apartment is dark and John mistakes him for his cousin, Fred.

The scene of the story changes quickly with the introduction of the heroine, Stella Donovan, a reporter, who is assigned to cover the Cavendish case. She heads for Haskell, Colorado, after eavesdropping on a conversation between Celeste and John at which time discovers that Celeste and Enright are involved in another crooked scheme in Haskell. In Haskell, Stella is met by the hero, a gold prospector, Jim Westcott, who had been partners with the "murdered" Fred Cavendish.

Together the pair hunt for an answer to Fred's murder, the connection between Celeste, Enright and other villains such as Ned Beaton who has a shady past in New York but is in Haskell now. Beaton, currently, is involved in a mine claim and thus he and Westcott have contact.

Before the story concludes, the reader is introduced to a Ferdinand Cavendish, a distant relative of Fred's and John's who only adds to the mix-up and the mistaken identity so important in the story. Fred is found alive finally, the identity of the murdered man determined, John and Celeste disappear and Enright is killed along with other assorted villains. Of course, Stella "escapes" with her story of the truth about the Cavendish murder but she resigns her job to remain in Haskell with Jim Westcott.

A Sword of the Old Frontier

Raoul de Coubert, the hero, and a soldier of France, is now a soldier of fortune, a mercenary, for the French in the New World. The time is post French and Indian War and the place the Illinois wilderness. Even though the war is technically over, grave problems remain, especially keeping the Indians under Chief Pontiac in control and on the side of the French. Thus Coubert is sent by de Villiers, also a Frenchman, as a messenger to Chief Pontiac from the French at Fort Chartres, in Illinois in the Mississippi valley. The French obviously want to retain their forest and territory in spite of the fact the English now own all of it, thus the French must let Pontiac and his forces know that the French are behind them all the way in harassing the English. By keeping the English out of the Illinois territory the French hope to hold onto it indefinitely.

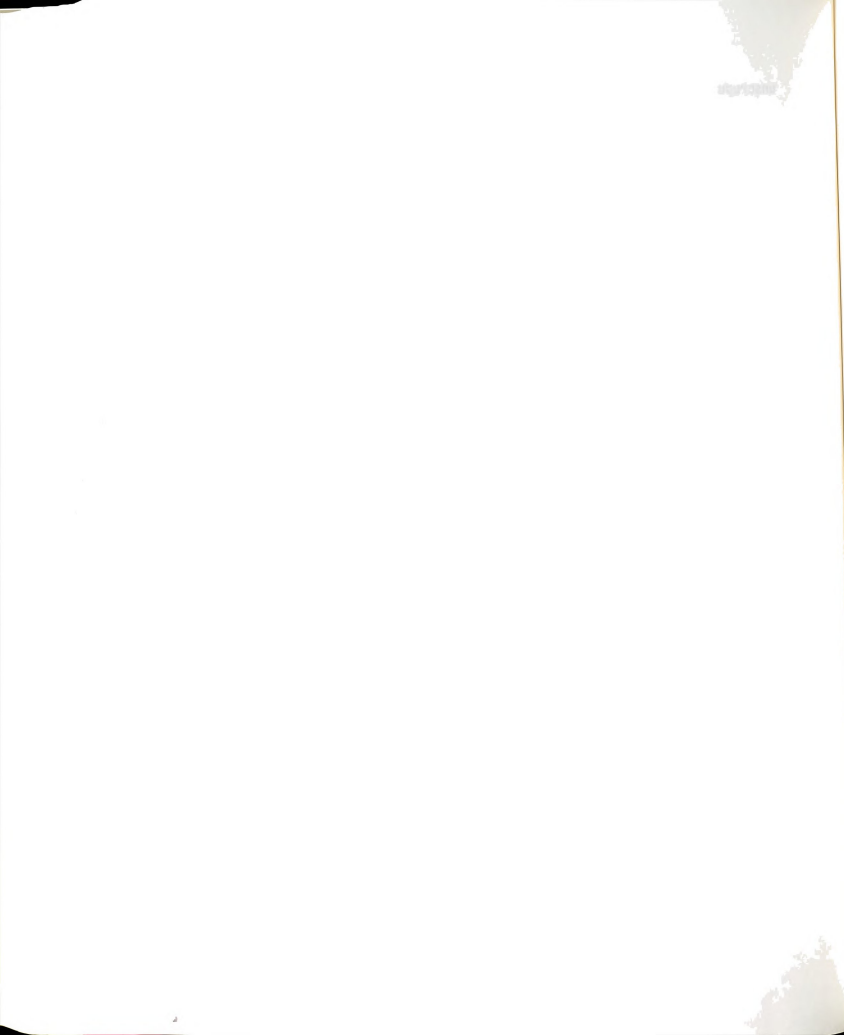
Shortly after Villiers makes his pact with Coubert, a half-breed arrives from the English to Fort Chartres with a message from major Gladwyn to Villiers. The message states that maybe the French and English can work together against Pontiac. Villiers's response is yes, but the problem now is obvious double-dealing.

While at Chartres Coubert meets two English ladies, Alene Maitland and her cousin, Rene. The two are trying to rejoin Rene's father, a lieutenant colonel stationed near Detroit. As the story progresses the two ladies are escorted by a wily sneak, Monsieur Guilleriez, through dangerous territory filled with hostile Indians,

unscrupulous traders and natural pitfalls. Coubert and his aide, Casadi, determine to follow behind the group to protect them from danger although Alene is scornful of Coubert's offer. Coubert falls in love with the disdainful Alene and thus he becomes even more determined to protect her and her cousin.

Later, the group are taken prisoner by Pontiac's forces as the half-breed messenger managed to get ahead of Coubert's group and lied to Pontiac about Coubert's intent.

Ultimately the problem is resolved when Coubert aids the girls in an escape from Pontiac's camp. At the end of the story, Alene admits she cares for Coubert and the two are to be wed and the English military are at last convinced that although Coubert bore a message against the English, he did save the colonel's daughter, thus he should not be censured further.



When Wilderness was King

A tale of the Illinois Country which young John Wayland goes in place of his aging and sick father to escort Toinette Matherson from Fort Dearborn, Illinois, through dangerous Indian territory to his home in Maumee, Ohio. The time is June, 1812, and thus, in addition to hostile Indians, some hostile British give John and his charge trouble. There is plenty of adventure, violence plus graphic description of hand to hand combat as John and Toinette and the small band they have joined make their way from Illinois to Ohio.



Wolves of the Sea (circa 1687)

The story was adapted from a manuscript written by a nobleman, Geoffrey Carlyle, a former Scottish ship captain. Because the manuscript was written in the stilted style of 17th century and some of it so yellowed with age it was barely decipherable, Parrish decided to update the tale to make it more pleasing to modern readers of the 20th century.

The hero, age 26, Geoffrey Carlyle, is exiled as a political prisoner and indentured servant to Virginia because of his treasonous activities in Scotland against the English.

Aboard the prison ship, he encounters the heroine, Dorothy Fairfax. Dorothy is returning with her uncle, Roger Fairfax, to a plantation in Virginia. Initially Fairfax purchases Carlyle as a favor to Dorothy, but Fairfax soon realizes that Carlyle's background will be of great value.

Carlyle is suspicious of a Spaniard aboard and warns Fairfax about this Lt. Silva "Black Sanchez", the villain. Later Carlyle overhears Sanchez talking with some men on the shore and discovers that Sanchez is a pirate who intends to steal the gold Fairfax has brought back to Virginia, abduct Dorothy and maybe kill Fairfax.

After knifing Sanchez and leaving him for dead, Carlyle gets aboard Sanchez's ship which had been trailing the prison sloop and begins to figure a way to free Dorothy. He persuades Estada, Sanchez's

henchman, to take him on as mate which will give Carlyle time to concoct a plan of escape for Dorothy and himself.

The sea voyage is one of intrigue, mystery and killing as the pirates conspire against each other. Eventually, Carlyle enlists the aid of some crew members and they take over the ship from the pirates.

The story concludes as Carlyle and the others leave the pirate ship temporarily and board a deserted schooner. Later they return to retrieve the gold and hear Sanchez reveal the mystery that surrounds him.

Carlyle is freed from his indentured state because of his courage and he and Dorothy wed.

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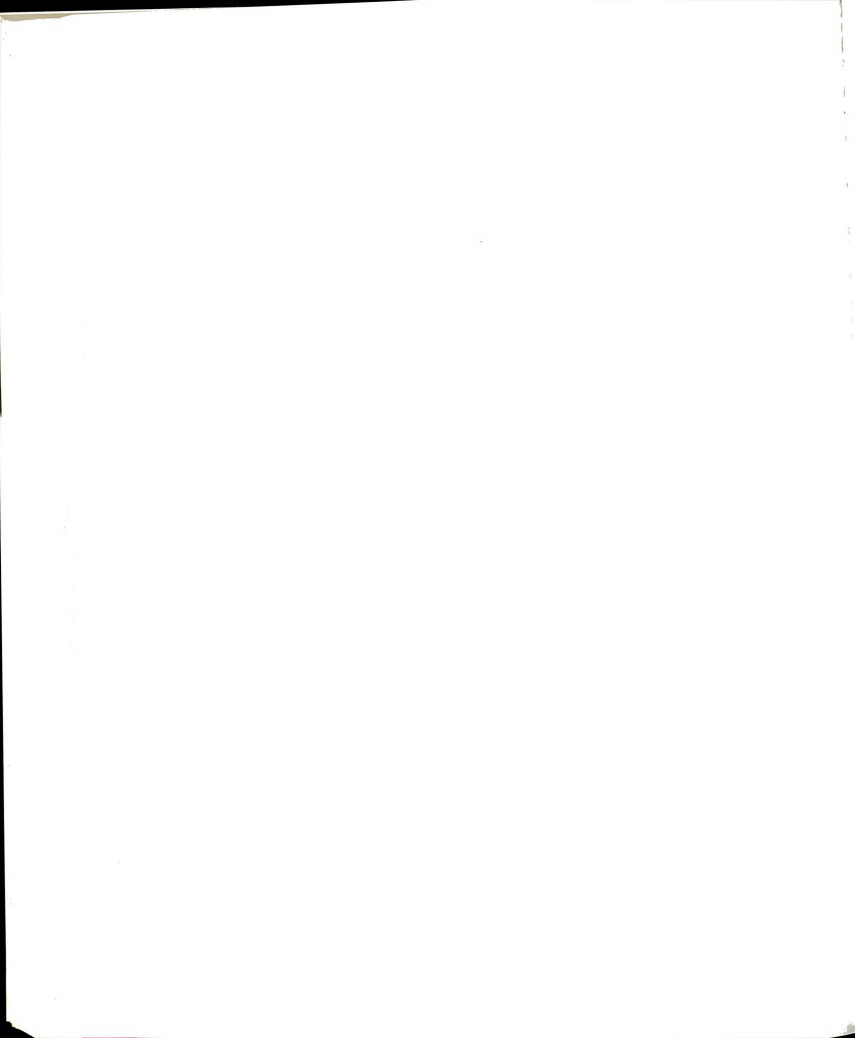
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