

Leigh Hunt contributed to *The Examiner* and *The Indicator*. He expressed his experiences and impressions of the journey to Italy in *A Journey of Honey from Hybla*. His varied knowledge of London life finds expression in his *Autobiography*.

Robert Southey (1744—1843), who contributed to *The Quarterly Review*, wrote famous biography entitled the *Life of Nelson*. His essays deal partly with literary and partly with social and political subjects. His essays are written in clear, graceful and easy prose.

Other Writers

W. S. Landor (1775—1864) is remembered for *Imaginary Conversations* which deals with a wide variety of topics from literary criticism to politics. It is a fine specimen of poetic prose.

Lockhart's fame mainly rests on *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*.

Fiction

The novel showed remarkable development during this period. This was largely due to the works of Sir Walter Scott and Jane Austen who firmly established the historical and the domestic types of novel.

Sir Walter Scott (1771—1832)

Sir Walter Scott, the father of historical novel, wrote with great haste and rapidity. His novels, known as the waverley novels, consist of twenty nine historical novels. The very first novel *Waverley*, published anonymously in 1814, was followed by other stories of Scottish life. During the next sixteen years he published twenty nine stories in all. Arranged in chronological order they are as follows : Eleventh century—*Count Robert of Paris*; Twelfth century—*The Betrothed*, *The Talisman*, *Ivanhoe*; Fourteenth century—*Castle Dangerous*; Fifteenth century—*The Fair Maid of Perth*, *Quentin Durward*, *Annie of Gierstein*; Sixteenth century—*The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, *Kenilworth*, *Death of the Lord's Jock*; Seventeenth century—*The Fortunes of Nigel*, *A Legend of Montrose*, *Woodstock*, *Peveril of the Peak*, *Old Mortality*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *The Pirate*; Eighteenth Century—*My Aunt Margaret's Mirror*, *The Black Dwarf*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, *Waverley*, *Red Gauntlet*, *Guy Mannering*; The Highland Widow, *The Surgeon's Daughter*, *The Tapasteried Chamber*, *The Two Drovers*, *The Antiquary*; Nineteenth Century—*St. Roman's Well*.

Scott, "the prophesier of things past", brought to the contemporary age an interest in the past and with his splendid gift of imagination he developed an almost a new genre, the historical novel. Edward Albert writes : "To historical novel he brought a knowledge that was not pedantically exact, but manageable, wide and bountiful. To the sum of this

knowledge he added a life giving force, a vitalizing energy, an insight and a genial dexterity that made his historical novel an entirely new species."

Scott's treatment of history is not entirely accurate. "But in general", writes W. H. Hudson, "he was marvellously successful in reproducing at least the externals of the periods which he describes, in giving us a vivid sense of their men and manners, and in breathing life into the dry bones of history." All novelists who draw upon history for their characters and events are his followers and acknowledge his mastery.

Jane Austen (1775—1813)

Jane Austen, the daughter of a clergy, was educated at home and her life was unexciting and unadventurous. She passed her life quietly and cheerfully in doing small domestic duties. With the exception of an occasional visit to Bath, her whole life was spent in small country parishes, whose simple country people became the characters of her novels. On her father's death the family shifted to the neighbourhood of Southampton, where the majority of her novels was written.

Her first novel, *Pride and Prejudice* (written in 1796—97 and published in 1813) deals with men and manners. It is a fine example of domestic comedy. *Sense and Sensibility* (written in 1797—98 and published in 1811) is another example of domestic comedy. *Northanger Abbey* (1798, published in 1818) is a burlesque of the Radcliffian horror novel. Her three novels *Mansfield Park* (1811—13, published in 1814), *Emma* (1815, published in 1816) and *Persuasion* (1816—17 and published in 1818) appeared in quick succession.

Jane Austen has been called "the pure novelist." She presents an authentic criticism of country society she knew so well within the limits of art. She simplified and refined it by making it a true reflection of English life. She represents in her novels the world she knew and the influences she saw at work. Her acquaintances included country families, clergymen and naval officers. The chief business of these people was attention to social duties. Their chief interest was matrimony. She describes this world in her novels. She never steps outside it. Great human passions and purposes of life were outside her range. Themes of personal relationships fascinated her. There is little passion ; the language of emotion is unknown to her. She says in *Sense and Sensibility* : "Sense is the foundation on which everything good may be based."

Jane Austen's novels are domestic comedies of a high order. She was mainly interested in the comedy of human nature. Her comedy was confined to human beings in personal relationships, between friend and friend, between parents and children, between men and women in love.

David Cecil writes : "The visible structure of Jane Austen's novels may be flimsy enough, but their foundations drive deep into the basic principles of human conduct. On her bit of ivory she has engraved a criticism of life as serious and as considered as Hardy's."

All her characters have a lively sense of humour, which is permeated with radiant optimism. Mrs. Bennett laments that after husband's death she may be turned out : "My dear", says her husband, "do not give way to such gloomy thoughts. Let us hope for better things. Let us flatter ourselves that I may be the survivor" ! Her humour is quiet, delicate, ironical and never satirical.

She was a flawless craftsman. "The secret of her power lies", writes Rickett, "in the complete mastery she has as an artist over her material. She was finally alive to her limitations, never touched a character or scene which she did not thoroughly know, and never invented a story or personage which she did not subject to such minutely intimate treatment that the reader feels as if it were all a fragment of autobiography."

Jane Austen was the first novelist who writes from the feminine viewpoint. She created powerful and life like women characters in her novels. She imparted realism to English novel in an age of romanticism. She is admired "for her influence in bringing our novels back to their true place as an expression of human life." She has carved an immortal place as a great novelist. Her fidelity to experience is amazing.

Other Novelists

Maria Edgeworth (1767—1849) confined herself to the limited domestic circle like Jane Austen. Her full length novels are *Belinda* (1801), *Leenora* (1806), *Patronage* (1814) and *Harrington* (1817). Her Irish tales which are considered her best work are *Castle Rackrent* (1800), *The Absentee* (1809) and *Ormond* (1817). Her stories for children were collected in two volumes—*The Parents' Assistant and Early Lessons*.

W. H. Ainsworth (1805—82) who wrote *The Tower of London*, *St. Paul*, *Windsor Castle*, *The Star Chamber*, *The Constable of the Tower* and *The Insurrection*, attempted historical novel. His method is crude and imitative of Scott. P. R. James (1801—60) also imitated Scott in *A Tale of France*, *The Field of Cloth of Gold* and *The Gipsy*.

Thomas Love Peacock (1785—1866) wrote seven novels, *Headlong Hill*, *Melin Court*, *Nightmare Abbey*, *Maid Marian*, *The Misfortunes of Elphin*, *Crothet Castle* and *Gryll Grange*. He was clear and straightforward in the treatment of his subject.

XVII. NOVEL IN THE AGE OF WORDSWORTH

1. Discuss Sir Walter Scott as a Historical Novelist.

Sir Walter Scott is remembered chiefly as a novelist. He is said to have popularized a new form of the novel, historical novel. His genius is best suited for this form. He mingles history with the life of the Scottish peasants.

The influence of the Romantic period is seen in Scott's choice of theme of the past, as the Romantics were interested in the Middle Ages. Again, Wordsworthian choice of 'humble and rustic life' is seen in his choice of the Scottish peasants. His first novel *Waverley* is nothing but an amalgamation of the manners of the Scottish and historical romance.

A historical novel is different from history. It is neither the life of the actual historical persons nor the presentation of actual facts of history. It only presents the life and manners of the people of a particular period. Scott's *Ivanhoe* is an imaginary novel, which has the historical background of the 12th century.

In his novels, Scott presents a picture of eight centuries. To give a few examples, his *Count Robert of Paris* is based on 11th century; *Talisman* and *Ivanhoe* on the 12th century; *Casile Dangerous* on the 14th century; *Quentin Durward* on the 15th century; *Kenilworth* on the 16th century; *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *The Legend of Montrose* and *Old Mortality* on the 17th century; *Rob Roy* and *The Heart of Midlothian* on the 18th century; and *St. Ronan's Well* on the 19th century. Scott not only deals with the history of Scotland and England but also with that of France.

Scott has a thorough knowledge of the past. Past came to him automatically. At the same time we cannot take the facts given by Scott as historical truths. He takes liberties with history.

Hence, for example, Scott's *Ivanhoe* cannot be taken as a perfect picture of the Middle Ages. His historical characters like James-I, Louis-XI, Elizabeth and others are all fine imaginative creations.

Again, Scott's novels are novels of action. They are drawn on a vast scale. Scott is always seen in his best when he presents his Scottish peasants and Scottish life, with which he is familiar. Even as a young boy, he was attracted by the stories about the borderland. His first attempt at literary composition was only Scottish ballads.

Scott has created a wide range of characters; but he lacks insight into his characters. His characters are broad and bold pictures but not the results of a psychological analysis. He is unable to paint stronger emotions like love, violence, anger, etc. At the same time, he excels all other novelists in portraying patriotism and loyalty.

There are certain defects in Scott's novels. His novels are all very well constructed. His creations lack spiritual insight and grasp. Scott is no good in presenting female characters. It is to be admitted that, in spite of all the defects, his novels never fail to please us.

2. Consider Jane Austen as a Novelist.

If Sir Walter Scott portrays the Scottish life in his novels, his contemporary, Jane Austen presents the life of the English country society. Jane Austen lived a quiet life. She avoided popularity when alive.

Jane Austen has six famous novels to her credit. Her masterpiece, *Pride and Prejudice* is a perfect comedy of manners. Her *Emma* deals with the heroine's attempts to find

husbands for her friend. *Sense and Sensibility* is satiric and ridicules the sentimentalists. *Mansfield Park* is a study of the members of a house, Mansfield Park. *Northanger Abbey* is modelled on Gothic novels. Her last novel, *Persuasion* is a moving love story of Anne Elliot and Frederick Wentworth.

Jane Austen has limitations. As a shy and timid girl she never had varied experience in life. She describes only the world she knows. Her novels are known as 'regional novels' wherein she describes South England. They are domestic novels. Some very common occurrences in her novels are picnics, dances, amateur theatricals, elopements, match makings, etc. Jane Austen never presents the kind of passions as Emily Bronte does. Her lovers are not very passionate. There is not even a mention of the French Revolution in her novels. Her novels are simply "tea-table novels".

Austen is a supreme realist. Her stories, characters and incidents are drawn from real life. The English drawing room atmosphere is realistically drawn. She has not described anything with which she had no real acquaintance.

Jane Austen's characters are not types but individuals, who are portrayed with great exactness. She has difficulty in creating male characters.

In her novels she records accurately the manners, charms and tricks of speech of her characters. She is not a satirist like Swift or Dickens. She is not even a moralist. She always likes good taste, sense and virtue. She likes sensible persons and hates folly.

Her plots are very well constructed. She may not be interesting to those who expect big actions, passionate lovers, and jarring characters. She is a class by herself.