FONTANE AS A SOCIAL NOVELIST.

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Ph.D. (Edin.)

by

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CORRECTIONS and ADDITIONS

BIBLIOGRAPHY  (Pagination should read 260ff.)

Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg, Ed. Atlantis, Berlin (1932)
Park, Rosemary (not Rosemarie)

NOTES

i  p. 3 (1)  K.J. = Meine Kinderjahre
     p. 6 (1)  Add Gesamtausgabe der erzählenden Schriften, 1925.

ii p. 17 (3)  Add Chapter 2, p. 289.
     p. 30 (1)  Add 1920, p. 110.

iii p. 38 (3)  Add p. 112.

iv p. 59 (2)  Add p. 11.
     p. 61 (1)  To read: p. 128.

v  p. 70 (2)  to read: p. 234.
     p. 72 (3)  Add p. 276.

vi  Add new note (1) for p. 84, line 12, to read F.B.II, p. 268.
    p. 93 (1)  Add p. 45.
    p. 99 (1)  To read: p. 46.

ix p. 151 (4)  To read: See Kriegsgefangen, chapter 6.


xii p. 176 (2)  Add p. 358.
    p. 177 (3)  Add p. 111-12.

xiii p. 188 (1)  To read: See R. Park on this point, p. 38.


" (4) Add p. 3-4.


p. 249 Add new note (2) for p. 249, line 6, to read:
F.B.II, p. 71. Renumber present note (2) as (3) and amend to read: Dresch, p. 314.
Renumber note (3) as note (4).

p. 253 (2) To read: p. 337.


" (2) To read: BR.FR.II, p. 219.
Minor Corrections and Additions

Text

p. 2, line 2  to read: Gewerbeschule (ditto on p. 9, line 18).
p. 18, " 21-22  Omit 'collection of'.
p. 21, " 8  to read: 'Not all Fontane's memories of his...'
p. 22, " 23  For 'stalk through' read 'appear in'.
p. 25, " 7  For Instetten read Innstetten (and throughout text).
p. 46, " 12-14  Omit L'Adultera and Ellernklipp; add Effi Briest.
p. 54, " 21  to read: 'Geert von Innstetten'.
p. 67, " 12  to read: 'Mann's fascination with the problems...'.
p. 72, " 4-5  to read: 'weltlich-frivolen Hauptstadt'.
p. 76, " 7  For 'man of fifty' read 'man of forty'.
p. 82, " 22  For 'where' read 'whereas'.
p. 84, " 12  Add note-reference (1).
p. 113, line 16  For Herrenhuter read Herrnhuter (ditto p. 117, 1.7).
p. 115, " 20  Delete 'ambition and'.
p. 116, " 8-9  For 'more the jovial' read 'a jovial'.
p. 121, " 13  Delete 'drawing-room'.
p. 144, " 14  For 'aimiably' read 'amiably'.
p. 170, " 4  For 'extremes of dislike' read 'extreme expressions of dislike'.
p. 176, " 19-20  For 'barbaric splendour' read 'barbaric chieftain'.
p. 181, line 17 to read: 'avoids depicting in detail anything...'.

p. 184, " 11 For 'balladesque novel' read 'balladesque tale'.

p. 192, " 13 For 'fifty' read 'forty'.

p. 198, " 1 Delete 'and reflected'.

p. 229, " 20 For 'tendencious' read 'tendentious'.

p. 237, " 9 For 'appartment' read 'apartment'.

p. 243, " 7 For 'florrid' read 'florid'.

p. 249, " 6 Add new note-reference (2).

p. " " 11-12 Quotation to read: 'le goût pour les menus faits'. Note-reference (2) becomes (3).

p. " " 19 Note-reference (3) becomes (4).

p. 254, " 1 For frohgemüt read frohgemut.

p. " " 19-20 to read: '...outbursts of an open...'.

p. 255, " 20 For unser Lübke read unsre Lübke.

p. 259, " 9 For 'his wife' read 'his daughter'.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Fontane's Personal Qualifications as a Social Novelist</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Fontane's Picture of the Aristocracy</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Fontane and the Middle Classes.</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Fontane and the Lower Strata of Society</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Fontane's Political Views and their Relation to his Novels</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>Special Social Problems; Fontane's Views on Love and Marriage</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>Fontane's Personal Values</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII</td>
<td>Fontane, the Novelist, in Comparison with Other Authors</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX</td>
<td>Some Distinctive Features of Fontane's Style and Technique</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>1-19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...
In assessing the special qualities of Fontane as a social novelist, it has been felt advisable to mention in some detail the influence of his formative years and the social experiences and impressions received during that lengthy portion of the author's life prior to the publication of his first novel at the age of sixty.

The survey of Fontane's picture of society includes the aristocracy of town and country, the middle classes (with special reference to Jewish and professional circles), and a number of representative figures from the working folk.

Fontane's political views will be analysed in order to determine his fundamental attitude to society and state, and to clarify the political references in his novels.

The special social problem of marriage, in which the author was particularly interested, will be investigated in the light of Fontane's views stated both in the published works and in his private correspondence.

Following an estimation of Fontane's personal values and philosophy of life, he will be brought into
brief comparison with other authors and literary movements, and finally some distinctive features of his style and technique will be commented upon.

No attempt has been made at completeness in the illustrations of chapters II, III, and IV; a number of representative examples have been selected from the novels which could, of course, be supplemented by many others.

Similarly Chapter VIII has been limited in its scope. In a study of this type it has been found necessary to restrict this section to a series of brief indications.

No 'footnotes' as such have been given, incidental comments and the authors of quotations being included in the main text, but a key to the titles and page-numbers of sources mentioned will be found at the end on pages i-xix. The figures in brackets in the body of the thesis refer to these notes.
CHAPTER ONE.

Fontane's Personal Qualifications as a Social Novelist.

1. The Developmental Period; Boyhood Influences.

The early stages of Fontane's life were of particular importance in the formation of the future social novelist. During these years he acquired an unusually wide and varied equipment of social experience which coloured and even in part determined the direction of his endeavours in the field of the novel. It is necessary to remember that, unlike most writers, Fontane had nearly sixty years in which to observe and study mankind before drawing upon his matured impressions in literary prose-form.

His earliest years (1819-27) were spent at Neuruppin, followed by a period of five years at the coastal resort of Swinemünde, where he received the deepest impressions of his boyhood. Until 1832 his educational background consisted mainly of his father's teaching, apart from a very brief period of attendance at the Neuruppiner Klippschule and the occasional assistance of a private tutor. Then from 1832-33 he was a scholar at the Ruppin Gymnasium, which first brought out his astonishing
flair for historical study. Finally he was transferred to the Klödensche Gewerbschule, Berlin (1833-36). The influence of the school itself was very small, but the life he led at the home of his Onkel August during these three years was of considerable significance, as will be seen.

A long formative period was an essential part of Fontane, the novelist-to-be, though if he had died young the world would have had no inkling of the genius slowly ripening within. Michelangelo, Titian, Victor Hugo or Goethe, had they died in their earlier years, would have left their mark on the world, but not so Fontane. (1) For Fontane was an observer, an "Augenmensch", who collected visual experience from the many and peculiarly favourable environments in which he found himself during his early years; he was not a "creator from within", relying on purely subjective experience.

**Parental Influence.** Though of French ancestry, both his parents were born in Germany and felt themselves to be Germans. Their French temperament manifested itself chiefly in the quality of imaginativeness, a trait which was passed on to their son to become a significant factor in the creation of his novels.

During his early years, the young Theodor was attracted principally to his father, whose influence on
the boy was considerable. It was to him that he owed his humour, zest for life, happiness in little things and sensitiveness to impressions. From the mother he acquired his sense of duty and love of order. So the respective parental influences were exactly the opposite of those of Goethe's family.

Fontane has described his father as "a tall, distinguished-looking Gascon, good-natured, full of imagination and humour, and an accomplished raconteur...." (1) These qualities might equally well have been written of the son, Theodor. His way of educating the boy was, to say the least of it, original. He laid greater stress on 'bon sens' and 'savoir faire' than on book-learning (2) and his teaching was based on a system of continuous question and answer, his so-called "Socratic Method".

One is reminded, in this connection, of the novelist's own liking for rhetorical questions ("Was ist...?", "Was soll denn...?") with which his works are strewn. In this parental instruction a great part was played by historical reminiscence, which stimulated in the boy those strong historical interests which not only dominated the ballads, 'Wanderungen' and early novels, but which were to appear again in the later works, either woven into
the plot and dialogue or simply as frank 'Einlagen'.

Fontane's mother was rather contemptuous of these hours of instruction, but he himself says: "I owe to these lessons... the best, or at any rate the most useful items of my entire knowledge." (1) The 'Anekdotenreichtum' gained from his father and from their joint perusal of periodicals and encyclopaedias he rates more highly than all he acquired from tutors and high-school teachers. Their joint dramatisation of some of these little stories (e.g. that of Latour d'Auvergne) (2), must have afforded an especially strong stimulus to the impressionable young mind and imagination of the writer-to-be.

It was at this time, too, that he received his first introduction to the works of Sir Walter Scott, a favourite author of his father. "He tended to read only Walter Scott, for which I am still grateful to him today, for even then a few fragments came my way" he was to write in later life. (3)

Louis Fontane was not a very strong-willed individual; he was oddly boyish and irresponsible, lacked all sense of the value of money and preferred cards and gambling to his serious duties. Fontane later remarked ironically: "We... sometimes wondered which passion was the more dangerous for us, my father's love of cards or
my mother's love of giving presents." (1) We learn too
that Louis Fontane was a 'Senator' in the town of Swine-
munde - and one distinguished by the fact that he never
attended a sitting! This dislike of bureaucratic life
was also shared by his son during his extremely brief
period as Secretary to the Academy of Arts.

Both men, father and son, possessed a profound
insight into the feminine psyche and a common ability to
breach dangerous topics without causing offence. The
author mentioned this fact in the Kinderjahre: "I have
inherited from him this tendency to enter, in jocular
fashion, into discussions with womenfolk upon delicate
topics; indeed I have taken over this tendency into my
writings, and when I read the corresponding scenes in my
novels and short stories, it is sometimes just as if I
heard my father speaking." (2)

But despite these similarities, their ways divided.
Fontane's father lacked the more balanced qualities of his
son and ended his life in an atmosphere of Micawber-like
make-believe and his famous 'Plaudertalent' degenerated
into garrulity. And this was inevitable; "denn wie er
ganz zuletzt war, so war er eigentlich." (3) How then,
did Theodor Fontane escape this negative side of his father's
character? What, in his early days, turned his 'Plauder-

talent' into channels leading to the literary riches of one of the most phenomenally productive old ages that Germany has seen? Ernst Heilborn (1) suggests that he had acquired the saving virtue of hard work at the right time in his development; "his imagination had been given direction" (2). Nevertheless Heilborn recognises that Theodor Fontane had also entered upon life with certain singularities of character which could have made practical existence a problem.

Fontane's mother was in every way a complete contrast to her husband - a strong, energetic character, unselfish in her devotion to duty, reliable in all the practical emergencies of daily life, sparing of words and sometimes austere to the point of bitterness.

The young boy took far less easily to her than to his father; only in later life did he fully realise and acknowledge the superiority of her moral fibre and the personal debt he owed to it, both as a writer and as a man. These positive qualities had often been obscured for him by her unsympathetic and often harsh manner. In adult life a new bond of affection sprang up between them, as their correspondence in the Familienbriefe has shown. He even referred in an autobiography (3) to the existence in his make-up of "... a longing for work and steady devotion to duty, the best qualities inherited from my mother."
Her values contrasted sharply with those of her spouse; she had little respect for scholarship, and the highest professional qualifications were as nothing to her when compared with the tangible success of the opulent merchant or banker. She had an essentially practical viewpoint in everything, and her ideal of happiness was a business-like affair, reckoned in terms of property and income. In bringing up the children she laid considerable emphasis on smartness of appearance and good manners, and tended towards that "Sinn für Repräsentation" which Fontane was later to portray so satirically in *Frau Jenny Treibel*. (1) At the same time her solid, reliable qualities imbued him with a lasting respect for these typical virtues of the middle classes and they are treated in his novels with half-reluctant admiration. (2)

The intense self-discipline practised by Fontane's mother was paid for in the form of extreme nervous sensitivity (3) and this psycho-somatic problem was unfortunately passed on to Theodor, who suffered acutely at times from nervous depression and emotional conflict. From him it was further passed on to a large number of his novel-characters, both male and female; (e.g. Grete Minde, Hilde Bocholt, Melanie van der Straaten, Schach von Wuthenow, Cécile de St.Arnaud, Graf Waldemar, Graf Holk and certain
Theodor Fontane thus inherited a mixture of "Talent" and 'Charakter', a combination which, on the surface, seems a happy one. But although these qualities are complementary, they must, to be effective, work harmoniously together and not in opposition - which they sometimes tended to do in the case of Fontane. As Friedrich Schonemann has pointed out, Fontane (like Faust) had "two souls within one breast" - on the one hand "Bürgerliche Solidität" and on the other a dangerously reckless, inactive and dilettante attitude towards life, a problem reminiscent of Thomas Mann's "Bürger-Künstler" conflict. (1) Thus there arose in him at times a struggle between intellect and emotion, often unconscious or suppressed emotion - a conflict which is continually reflected in his novel-characters for whom it frequently has tragic results. (E.g. Schach, Waldemar, Holk, Effi, Lehnert Menz and most of the heroines of the 'Ehebruchsgeschichten'.) Fontane himself speaks of "die Gedoppeltheit meiner Natur" (2), of which he was acutely aware.

Other Formative Influences at Swinemünde.

The significant influence of the town itself, with its variegated social background, must not be forgotten. Although it by no means presented the same picture as
does the modern resort, (Fontane himself admits that it was "ein unschönes Nest" (1),) it was full of a charm all its own, with its lively atmosphere of continual comings and goings, its bustle of trade and shipping. "It was a truly wonderful life in this little town," he wrote in 1892, "of which even now I think with the liveliest emotions, as indeed of my whole colourful and varied childhood existence."

(2) Owing to its international character, it was free from those narrow "Philisteranschauungen" which would almost certainly have pervaded other inland towns of its size. Its floating population, too, of Swedes, Danes, Dutch and other foreign elements, gave the young eye of the future novelist an infinitely wider social picture than would normally have been possible.

At Berlin with Onkel August.

This period of residence with his uncle was occasioned by his father's decision to send him to the Klöden-ensche Ömerbschule. The influence of the school itself was negligible, but life with Onkel August opened up many new opportunities. He learned to become a skilful truant, and visited instead places like Grunewald, Jungfernheide and Tegel, so beginning his early acquaintance with the Mark. He refers to these stolen excursions as his "Wanderings through the Mark of Brandenburg long before their legitimate
beginning." (1) Then during the afternoons he would explore his beloved Berlin or sit in one of the well-known cafés, such as Anthieny's, observing with keen eyes the typically Berlin clientele or devouring with growing interest the literary periodicals provided there.

The personality of his uncle August was not without its influence on the youth; he was greatly attracted by his humour and 'Plauderei' as well as by the considerable freedom which he allowed his nephew. On the other hand, his eventual financial ruin, due to an inherent instability, provided a salutary warning. In his uncle he saw his father's temperament in an even more reckless form and began to realise fully the lurking dangers in himself. "I had grown up under conditions in which absolutely nothing was in proper order. The strangest business-methods and the corresponding financial situations were all in the day's routine," he wrote in later years. (2)

So the closing period of his boyhood, on the eve of his pharmaceutical apprenticeship, ended on a note of caution, self-examination and moral reflection. The foundations were laid, too, for certain aspects of his future values as a social novelist; (E.g. the recurrent themes of social stability and the conflict between the individual and organised society.)
Educationally, from the purely academic viewpoint, his boyhood had provided a defective background; in the wider sense, it had given him an incomparable storehouse of impressions, memories and social experiences, from which the novelist of the 'Berlin' epoch was to draw freely with such happy results.

Speaking as a mature writer in 1892, he can say in all truth: "Wie wurden wir erzogen? Gar nicht und - ausgezeichnet!" (1)

Added to this, these early years had provided a formative period during which the predominant note was one of happiness. He has summed it up as a time when he was contented and at peace as never again until the very latest years of his life. It was his subjective experience of life's 'poetry' (2), to be followed all too soon by long and often trying years of 'prose'. And from this oasis of early contentment was to issue that spirit of "lächelnde, verzeihende Milde" which was so characteristic of the master novelist.

2. The following 'Apothekerzeit'. (1836-49)

In the person of his first employer, Wilhelm Rose, he discovered a model for the future bourgeois types of his novels. Rose was a typical instance of that 'Geldsackgesinnung', masked by apparent
ideals, which he was later to expose so ruthlessly in Frau Jenny Treibel.

From Berlin he moved to Burg, near Magdeburg, where he stayed for only three months, for he quickly found the atmosphere of the place unbearable; it was his first contact with that 'spiessburgerlich' element of society which was to be another target of his wrath in the Berlin novels.

Following a period of illness, he then transferred to Leipzig - a city which at that time had much more of the spirit and appearance of a 'Grossstadt' than Berlin itself, as well as enjoying an age-old tradition of culture. This Leipzig phase represented for Fontane a sharpening of his critical and aesthetic senses; he had now acquired standards of comparison. His personality, too, began to develop, and he was able by his genial manner to overcome the traditional Saxon attitude of suspicion towards all Prussians. He continued his avid study of literary periodicals, made a number of new historical expeditions and had the opportunity of visiting the scene of the 'Völkerschlacht', an excursion which gave him the liveliest pleasure: "Historischen Grund und Boden zu betreten, hatte zu jeder Zeit einen besonderen Zauber für mich", he was later to write of this experience. (1)
His stay at Leipzig was ended by a return of illness, followed by a lengthy convalescence. After a year at the Struwsche Apotheke in Dresden, however, he returned to Leipzig and made his first attempt to live as a free-lance writer; he even thought of studying history on a full-time basis at the University. All these plans were stopped by the advent of his compulsory military service. (See next section). On returning to civil life he joined Schacht's 'polnische Apotheke' in Berlin, then, late in 1847, the 'Jungsche Apotheke', where he lived through the 1848 Revolution, described from such an unusual angle in Von Zwanzig bis Dreissig (See also section on Fontane's politics.)

More important than the political significance of the events in 1848 was the light which they shed for him upon human nature, with its contrasts of greatness and pettiness, heroism and bathos. (We recall, for example, his account of the queue at the chemist's on the morning after the fighting - not for bandages, but for the usual free cod-liver oil: "Freiheit konnte sein, Lebertran musste sein", Fontane commented with a sad smile at human frailty. (1).)

The final year of his work as a pharmacist was
spent at the Bethanien foundation, bringing him into contact with the prototypes of so many of those ecclesiastical figures found later in practically all his novels.

So ended a period of Fontane's life, the chief importance of which for the novelist of later years was the personal contact it afforded him with a wide cross-section of Berlin society. This deepening of his knowledge of humanity contributed to the steady maturing of his powers.

He apparently found the profession of chemist neither especially congenial nor the reverse; he served his employers with typical conscientiousness but was never inclined to identify his real interests with this sphere. In a way he led a double life during these years; a chemist by day and a poet by night! In later years he commented ironically on this: "A chemist who, instead of pharmacy, wants to live by poetry, is about the craziest thing imaginable." (1)

3. His Military Service (1844-45)

(His views on militarism appear in the political section—)

Fontane served for a year with the Kaiser Franz Regiment, and despite his inner repulsion from various aspects of military life, appears to have been
an efficient soldier who eventually rose to the rank of 'Unteroffizier'. At the same time he preserved an inner sense of ironical humour for the pomposity and make-believe of the life around him.

The special significance of this experience lies in the manifold contacts he made with military personalities (both great and small), their jargon and their mode of thought. They too, appear with great frequency in the Berlin novels of his later life. He met all types - kind, fatherly old officers (such as the elderly Hauptmann so charmingly sketched in his memoirs; (1), ) stern but scrupulously just Prussian officers of the old school, fashionable young lieutenants, N.C.O's and private soldiers.

4. His Visits to England and Scotland.

These were three in number; the first was in 1844, on special leave from his regiment, and was of brief duration. The second was in 1852, as correspondent of the 'Preussische (Kreuz-) Zeitung', when he stayed for six months. The third stay was much longer, (1855-59) and was of a semi-political, semi-journalistic nature. The value of all these visits was enormous. (2)

Even on his first hurried acquaintance
with Great Britain, he realised the tremendous significance this contact was to hold for him. Dressed in a simple brown jacket and his military trousers, his few possessions wrapped in a paper-parcel, he stood at the ship's rail in rapt contemplation of the 'Riesenstadt', London, which was to have such a profound influence on his future work and outlook.

Brief though this first visit was, he carried home with him a vivid series of new social impressions and a hunger for closer acquaintance with English life. This was afforded him in 1852, when he travelled widely throughout England, obtaining not only the tourist's viewpoint but also an intimate personal knowledge of homes and people. This second stay bore early fruit in the form of translations and adaptations of English and Scottish ballads and also the volume Ein Sommer in London, his first prose-work of significance.

It was during his third visit, lasting several years, that he undertook his extensive travels in Scotland which produced the momentous decision to carry out a similar tour of discovery in the Mark of Brandenburg.

His social impressions of Britain were largely favourable, although he was strongly critical
where he disapproved. He liked above all the informality of English home-life, which was illustrated for him most clearly by the invitation he once received from a complete stranger to stay at his house and by the superb sang-froid with which the housewife met this unexpected invasion. (1) This admiration for English social poise is a tribute which he often repeated, for here, as in his native country, he liked to study individuals as social types, and their accepted customs as racial phenomena. 'National psychology' might be said to be one of his private hobbies, as has been revealed by his letters. Here, of course, one of the traditions which interested him, as many other foreign visitors, was that of the redoubtable 19th century British Sunday! He referred to it feelingly as "a frightful epic of dreariness and boredom." (2)

Dresch (3) finds Fontane's impressions of England rather superficial and objects that he lacked the necessary historical and political background. While this may be true of certain deeper historical interpretations of the country, I would suggest that Fontane's first-hand impressions of places, customs, social values and general 'atmosphere' are singularly acute and still read vividly even after a century has
passed. His approach was sympathetic, though without 'Schwärmeri', and when criticisms were made, these were without rancour. The same kindly and tolerant tone is to be found in his English impressions as in the later novels of German social life.

As in earlier days Leipzig had served as a new standard of comparison for his Berlin impressions, so now England offered him on a larger scale another opportunity of testing and heightening those aesthetic values received in Germany. Whilst he found much to excite his admiration and wonderment, he deplored the current British styles of architecture and was led by this and other observations to the reluctant conclusion that the contemporary generation in this island were lacking in two main qualities - taste and beauty;

(1). Although his aesthetic sense may have been educated rather in negative fashion by the ugly pretentiousness of mid-Victorian industrial opulence, he drew positive inspiration from the countryside, national monuments and historical landmarks. The results of his impressions are to be seen in the collection of feuilletons, later collected together under the title Aus England und Schottland. As well as indicating the growth of the author's sense of social
psychology, the Scottish section of these reminiscences testifies to the deep understanding which he had for the stirring and often tragic historical background of the places he had visited north of the Tweed. Perhaps the most significant influence of his Scottish travels was the decision which they brought about to undertake similar explorations on a larger scale in his native Mark of Brandenburg.

"It was... in the vicinity of an ancient castle which rises in the middle of Loch Leven that the thought first came to me - 'Well, after all, Mark Brandenburg has just as much to offer; why not go there and point it out?" (1)"

These essays on his British sojourn helped, too, to develop his supreme talent as a 'causeur', and, in the faithful reproduction of actual conversations, gave him practice in the art "die Menschen so sprechen zu lassen, wie sie wirklich sprechen." (2)

The depth of these English impressions may be judged by the frequency with which references to Great Britain occur in the writings of the later years, especially his private letters, and the friendly correspondence he kept up with a number of people (such as James Morris) in this country.
In the Berlin novels, references to England are frequent, as are also English phrases. English characters appear on the scene, sometimes in such unexpected circumstances that one feels Fontane's personal interest had sought a favourable occasion for introducing them. His educated personages usually appear to have a working knowledge of English literature, history and political life, giving the impression of a strong English 'vogue' in German aristocratic society of the late 19th century. One thinks of the Hamburg Mukks in Frau Jenny Treibel with their Anglo-Saxon cult, the Barby's of Der Stechlin with their English background and interests, the Scottish descent of Von Gordon in Cécile, the Walter Scott enthusiasm of Graf Holk in Unwiederbringlich.

In Frau Jenny Treibel a young Englishman, Mr. Nelson from Liverpool, appears on the scene and imparts an Anglo-Saxon flavour to the Kommerzienrat's dinner-table conversation. English servants also appear in some of the novels; Schach von Wuthenow has an English groom, Ned, and in Der Stechlin the Berchtesgadens, friends of the Barby family, have an English coachman, Robinson.

Nor are these characters merely part of the background; we learn something of their personalities, especially their distinctively English traits, and hear them speak
in a mixture of English and German phrases. In Der Stechlin Woldemar himself is sent on a military mission to Britain and the occasion arouses a lively series of reminiscences on the part of his friends, the Barbys, into which the author pours much of his own personal experience and his still-fresh memories of those distant days spent in the island kingdom.

Not that all Fontane’s memories of his English stay were as happy as these; he suffered especially from the restrictions imposed by his inadequate income and had ample opportunity to appreciate the role that money played in Victorian society. Nevertheless the balance was a favourable one, and even the difficulties gave him an additional insight into the problems of social life.

"I am firmly convinced", he wrote to his mother in 1857, "that the schooling and apprenticeship which I am undergoing here is absolutely essential for my later life at home." (1)

The soundness of his judgment is borne out by the existence of the Wanderungen, which were inspired by this 'apprenticeship', and by the whole series of his novels to which the Wanderungen were a stepping-stone.
Fontane devoted many years of his life to the service of the press, not only as a literary critic and personal contributor, but as a reporter, correspondent and political editor. As Fritz Mauthner has pointed out (1), these years of journalistic near-slavery were, in later life, to become a sore point with him, rather like his lack of formal education was already. "Filling up newspaper columns is not my true profession," he complained (2) to his wife in a letter from London. Nor was his remuneration such as to reconcile him with this work; his letters of this period are filled with the problems of supporting his wife and family on insufficient means over a period of many years.

But if this profession did not bring him great monetary rewards, it at least left him rich in social experience of the type most suited to the future novelist. It widened his political interests (he wrote for both conservative and radical journals), it kept up his connections with England (for years he wrote the English commentary for the Kreuzzeitung), it focussed his attention on the political figures and the major social problems which stalk through the pages of his novels, it brought him into personal contact with people from all...
walks of life and took him to many different places, both at home and abroad.

In a letter written from London in 1856 during a lull in his journalistic activities, he expressed a deep longing for an ideal existence which he was then temporarily enjoying for a few brief days - "to sit still, no disturbances, to write, read and drink coffee" - (1), a peaceful idyll which he was only able to realise very late in life. But it is doubtful whether Fontane would ever have become the great social novelist and 'Menschenkenner' that we know without the stimulus and contact of the everyday working world which these journalistic years afforded him.

His activities as theatrical critic, an extension of his work as a journalist, likewise brought him into contact with another sphere of life and hosts of new people - dramatists, producers, directors, musicians and, above all, the actors and actresses themselves. At the outset his knowledge of the theatre was slim (he recognised his limitations and never ventured into the sphere of drama as a writer) and he has recorded with gleeful irony that his early critiques gave rise to the witticism that the accompanying signature "Th.F." stood for "Theater-Fremdling". But
his sense of what was effective on the stage and, above all, his uncanny feeling for what was real and convincing in dialogue and characterisation, soon established for his judgment a healthy respect on the part of the theatre-going public. We may estimate his eventual familiarity with the world behind the footlights by the appearance in his novels of actors and actresses based on real-life models he had met during these years. (E.g. Wanda Grutz- macher in Stine, Herr von Klessentin in Die Poggenpulfs, Franziska Franz in Graf Petofi.)

Also significant during this period was his brief personal experience of the ways of bureaucracy. He had always preferred the hardships of a free-lance existence to the safe but monotonous life of a ministerial appointment; from London he wrote to his mother in 1858: "Even with all its worries and dangers, I infinitely prefer to make my way, poor but independent, as a teacher, a columnist or a private tutor." (1) Nevertheless he did eventually in 1876 accept for a brief period the position of Secretary to the Academy of Arts at Berlin, only to give it up again after a few months, disgusted with the life of routine and petty detail.

It was the triumph of his old maxim, expressed to his wife in a letter of 1856: "I feel that I am born to be
a poet, not a public servant." (1)

Again, this irksome interlude was not without its future literary harvest. His ministerial and civil service colleagues live on in the pages of his novels. We meet them gathered around the dinner-tables of Van der Straaten and St. Arnaud, and most clearly of all in the person of Instetten, the cold, bureaucratic, 'Prinzipienreiter' husband of Effi Briest.

The 'Tunnel.' This was not the first literary club of which Fontane had been a member; he had been associated with the Platen and Lenau clubs at Berlin and the Herwegh club at Leipzig. But the special importance of the 'Tunnel über der Spree' lay partly in the literary experience he gained there and the criticism of work which he had both to give and to receive, and partly in the social connections of a very special kind that the club was able to offer him.

In the 'Tunnel' he met not only poets and novelists, but dramatists, musicians, painters, lawyers, officers and administrative officials, many of whose portraits appear in part in the 'Berlin' novels. Men of different rank and from many contrasting walks of life met in the 'Tunnel' club-room on a footing of complete equality, protected from social embarrassment by the
adoption of pseudonyms - a daring democratic device for the period! But it was not in any sense a Berlin 'Dichterschule'; no manifestos were issued and there was no profession of a common literary aim. It was first and foremost a meeting-place for poets and those interested in poetry, where members' works might be read and criticised.

Fontane himself took an active part in the proceedings and received in return numerous fresh literary stimuli. The 'Tunnel' increased his knowledge of English and Scottish literature (most of his free translations of the Anglo-Scottish ballads were made during this period), and encouraged his interest in Shakespeare (he produced a number of Shakespearean translations whilst in the 'Tunnel'.)

Perhaps the factor of greatest importance, in assessing the literary and social value of the 'Tunnel' for Fontane, was the opportunity it gave him of meeting under completely informal conditions the aristocracy of the Mark. Here he got to know them as persons instead of legendary figures. Here, too, there was an unusually close rapprochement between members who belonged to the nobility and those from the middle classes, a phenomenon which
aroused Fontane's interest in this problem.

His Service as War Historian; the 'Kriegsbuchere.'

He was a war-historian and correspondent of acknowledged talent, and the two 'unofficial' works of this phase in his career, *Kriegsgefangen* and *Aus den Tagen der Okkupation*, demonstrated his special ability to link up past and present and his growing sense of 'das Genrehafte' which was later to play such an important part in the construction of *Vor dem Sturm*.

Summary: This long period of Fontane's life, extending over the 42 years from 1836 to 1878 had been one of continuous struggle. Through his travel-books and his ballads he had at least become known to a limited public, but the recognition of his real worth was still only niggardly. But Fontane, unlike most of his future novel-characters, was a fighter in his own quiet, seemingly resigned fashion. Consequently he managed to retain through these long and arduous years of very limited success so many of those happy, boyish traits which enrich his mature novels with a sense of youth and thankful enjoyment of the small happinesses life had to offer. The same cool powers
of objective observation which he later brought to bear upon his characters, he was able in times of crisis to apply to himself, thus minimising the effect of life's shocks and countering the natural sense of bitterness so easily engendered in an over-sensitive nature. For bitterness there certainly was in Fontane's soul, as his family letters have revealed, but it was essentially a private bitterness which he never allowed to overcloud his personality or envenom his art. Having felt the severity of life himself, he was all the more inclined to sympathise with the rest of humanity and to view their shortcomings with a forgiving eye, as he did so often in the Berlin novels.

Thus the struggles of this period probably helped to develop his artistic greatness, a quality which needs the addition of suffering to arrive at full maturity.

"Only the bitter experiences of life gave to this man of sanguine Gascon temperament a true fulness and depth of personality," says Pniower (1). Had he not been so severely tested by fate, he could scarcely have manifested his 'melancholy optimism' with such intensity.

"Instead of the gold which life still owed to him, he accepted gratefully and without prettiness the small coins of everyday happiness." (2)

But the golden treasure of life's experience was already his.
Effect of the ballads and Wanderungen on his Novels.

Franz Servaes has compared Fontane's ballads to historical anecdotes seen through the poet's eye: (1) ("dichterisch angeschaute Geschichtsanekdoten").

From this definition emerge two elements which indicate the connection between the author's ballads and his later prose-works. Firstly they are historical poems, and this same historical thread continues by way of the Wanderungen to the early novels such as Vor dem Sturm, Grete Minde, Ellernklipp, Schach von Wuthenow and reappears in the numerous historical discussions and 'Einlagen' of the later works.

Secondly, Fontane's approach is 'anecdotal', a trait which is carried on in an unbroken line right up to his last and most anecdotal novel, Der Stechlin.

Feelings which he was able only late in life to express in prose-form came to an earlier maturity in his verse. In later years he found that he was still able to read his early ballads with pleasure, whereas his first prose attempts caused him acute embarrassment. "I acquired an ability in poetry thirty years earlier than in prose," he wrote to his wife in 1882. (2)

Excluding the Anglo-Scottish adaptations, these early ballads, tinged though they are with a romanticism
which contrasts sharply with his later realism, do show the deep inner attachment that the poet already felt for the Mark. At first this was largely based on historical sentiment; the Wanderungen were to add the deeper affection of personal contact, and from that point onward the province was to remain the background of all his greatest works. The style and construction of the novels, too, were to stand indebted to the ballad-era; Roethe speaks of their "anschauungsschweren Vordeutungen" and their "sprunghaft" qualities (1) which point back along these paths. The novelist remained at heart a ballad-writer, though operating in the medium of prose.

But the gap between Fontane the ballad-poet and Fontane the novelist remained, despite certain fundamental affinities, a considerable one, which could only be bridged gradually. This process was achieved mainly through the Wanderungen.

Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg.

When Fontane began his 'Wanderungen' through the Mark, it is probable that he was not already a convinced enthusiast, but just an interested dilettante. The wanderings themselves brought out and developed his love of the province. Nor were these essays an attempt to provide an exhaustive travellers'-handbook or a
scholarly treatise. It was the people of the Mark and their social customs and background which interested him, so producing what Maync has aptly termed "a charming collection of human documents." (1) Of primary interest were, of course, the nobility of the Mark.

Perhaps the neatest definition of the character of these Wanderungen is that given by Schlenther (2). He points out that Fontane "aimed neither at being a Baedeker nor a Ranke for his native province" and calls the work "a combination of landscape-painting and historical reminiscence, a blending of social and human studies with nature-poetry in prose, of general observation with personal experience." He, too, feels that the novels owe their existence to the inspiration of the Wanderungen-experiences.

As in the case of the ballads, the travel-volumes were an excellent form of literary discipline, but far overshadowing this aspect was the unparalleled opportunity they gave Fontane of getting to know the landed nobility in their own homes and in the setting of their ancestral estates.

It was highly fortunate that he managed to establish such a remarkable degree of intimacy between himself and his aristocratic hosts. Lacking social rank or distinctions and still without wide literary fame, he
was yet able by virtue of his kindly, natural and instinctively well-bred personality to achieve a cordiality of intercourse which effortlessly bridged the gap of social origins. Otherwise his task would have been painfully humiliating and his literary plans might well have been frustrated. Calling at first one ancient manor and then another, he almost invariably received a courteous, indeed a cordial welcome. Not only was he given every assistance by local officials, schoolmasters and clergy, with full access to their records and documents, but the Junkers themselves gladly placed at his disposal their family chronicles and memoirs, old letters and even personal diaries. This abundance of priceless material furnished him with a source of inspiration not only for the Wanderungen themselves but for the whole series of his greatest novels dealing with the people of the Mark.

As well as gaining a thorough knowledge of the Junkers themselves, he also came into daily contact with all the subsidiary characters connected with this sphere of life - servants, estate officials, gamekeepers, farmers, verderers, sacristans, country clergymen, village schoolmasters, rural dignitaries and innkeepers - all of whom figure with such realism in the pages of his
novels. Their life-like qualities not only impress the reader of today, but also withstood successfully the sterner scrutiny of contemporary society, whose judgments were based on everyday actuality.

Maync has pointed out, too, that thanks to these extensive travels Fontane avoided the danger of becoming a hot-house writer, a salon poet who sees life from an unreal viewpoint. Here, as in his later masterpieces, he has remained an outdoor poet, 'ein Freiluftmenschen.' (1) Like the novelist, his characters were also to long for the fresh air, and his later works abound with country excursions, al fresco meals, solitary constitutionals, balcony and garden scenes.

At this point Fontane was known to both press and public as a kindly, middle-aged gentleman who could safely be classed as a patriotic drawing-room poet and the inoffensive author of a number of non-controversial travel-books and historical reminiscences, and from this conception they were loth to depart. He commented ironically: "My allotted task is thus to go on writing 'märkische Wanderungen' for all eternity!" (2) His emergence as a writer of highly controversial, contemporary social novels disturbed and annoyed them.

"Man wollte ihn ins Grosspapatum hineinphilistern"
Transition to 'Vor dem Sturm': This first and longest novel of the series did not excite the wrath of the critics unduly, since it represented a natural and gradual change and had not as yet brought him into the thorny path of contemporary society. Their criticism was based largely on questions of construction and length, and the initial tendency was to regard it as a 'Wanderung' which had gone slightly astray. Indeed its intimate connection with the Wanderungen was unmistakable; the same historical background, the same familiar setting in the Mark. "It is with caution and in the environment which is so familiar to him that Fontane enters the realm of epic creation", comments Dresch. (2) Full of lengthy diversions into the realms of history, tradition, literature, architecture and ethnology, this novel nevertheless represented the decisive transition into a new sphere. In it were united all those 'Urtriebe' of the journalist, historian, wanderer and 'Plauderer' (3), perhaps a clumsy and imperfect unity in this first work, but representing a combination which in due course was to lead him to the foremost rank of 19th century writers.

In this fusion of his forces, there was opened up
before him a galaxy of new opportunities for the use of his special gift, cultivated and strengthened during the preparation of the *Wanderungen* - the power of observing and describing mankind. "Das Beobachten und Schlusseziehen ist, wie Du weisst, meine Wonne", he once wrote to his wife in later years (1). But it is doubtful whether this extraordinary power of perception would have ever arrived at such a pitch of masterly skill without the schooling lasting nearly sixty years which we have just surveyed - a schooling begun at Swinemünde, continued during his various professional appointments, in the army, in England, in the 'Tunnel', in his journalistic activities, and, above all, in the years of patient travel and research throughout the Mark of Brandenburg. These especially were to set the initial tone of his novels, characterised by Biese (2) as being "in their essence also 'Wanderungen' - Wanderings through the life of this world, with pauses by the wayside, and undertaken at a gentle, strolling pace."
CHAPTER TWO

Fontane's Picture of the Aristocracy.

Having noted Fontane's special interest in the nobility of the Mark and the early results of this in the poems and the Wanderungen, it is hardly surprising to find that in the novels similar attention is paid to the personalities and problems of the aristocracy. Indeed, in the great majority of these works this class of society plays the leading rôle and appears in some form or another in all of them.

The aim of this chapter will be to determine and discuss, firstly the picture of the aristocracy presented by him, together with his views on them as a class, and secondly, the special contribution of the various novels to this picture, symbolised in the figures of a number of the leading characters.

By 'aristocracy', Fontane means the nobility of Wendish-Germanic origin, living to the east of the river Elbe, and it is his artistic endeavour to both portray and, to a certain extent, justify this class. For it is clear that they did not only represent for him an interesting field of artistic representation, but that he also felt a personal sense of spiritual
kinship with them. It must therefore be our aim to discover firstly what constituted this strong appeal which they undoubtedly had for him. It may well be added that, upon examination, the views on this subject expressed in his novels, his letters to friends, and his more intimate family correspondence, show certain discrepancies, giving rise occasionally to contradictions. In this connection it is necessary to bear in mind that, as in other fields (politics, for example), the tone of his letters, especially those to his family, is often determined by the prevailing mood of a moment, whereas the novels express his matured artistic views and are often a more exact statement of his considered intellectual verdict. These two aspects of the problem ought probably to be regarded as complementary rather than antagonistic.

One of the chief sources of his admiration for the nobility of the Mark lay in their aesthetic appeal. They represented for him a certain way of life, enshrining dignity, style, culture and tradition, and approaching that ideal of the full and ample existence free from the petty cares of 'Pfennigwirtschaft', which had been denied to himself. It is this appreciation of their long tradition of style in living that causes him
to write: "Wer den Adel abschaffen wollte, schaffte den letzten Rest von Poesie aus der Welt." (1) Consequently he finds that "three generations of one single branch of the Marwitz family" are infinitely more interesting than ten generations of several hundred families of bourgeois origin. (2)

Koethe sums up this aristocratic preference in the following words; (3) - "he was deeply conscious of the charm and the cultural tradition which history had bestowed upon the nobility and only upon them", and sees in the aristocracy Fontane's secret ideal.

Perhaps the most concise and expressive utterance of Fontane himself on this subject is the one to be found in the Wanderungen (4); here the finest qualities of the aristocracy are noted in typical Fontane language:

This strong personal attraction does not, however, allow the assumption that Fontane was also prepared to endorse the contemporary political rôle of the Junkers; a deep cleavage in his feelings exists on this point. It is not uncommon, when dealing with Fontane, to discover that he feels drawn towards
persons from social circles whose corporate attitude he is obliged to reject either in part or completely. As Bieber has pointed out (1), the novelist conversely finds on occasion that he may admire greatness of character, from an intellectual standpoint, whilst being unable to experience any emotional attraction towards the persons concerned. Fontane himself has said of his dual attitude towards the Prussian nobility (2):

"Wohin ich auch noch geschoben werden mag, ich werde immer zwischen politischen Anschauungen und menschlichen Sympathien zu unterscheiden wissen, und diese menschlichen Sympathien habe ich ganz ausgesprochen für den markischen Junker." 'Even those who are by no means "glänzende Nummern" still have a certain personal charm for him.

Nor are we left in any doubt about Fontane's own attitude towards the traditional 19th century 'reactionary' politics of a certain type of Junker.

"Die Rückschrittsprinzipien als solche sind sehr gegen meinen Geschmack", he says, "aber die zufälligen Träger dieser Prinzipien haben es mir doch nach wie vor angetan." (3) But he wonders whether the profession of such principles is really to be taken too seriously, and on the basis of his wide knowledge of the
Junkers, he doubts it and suggests that the day may well come when all this will change.

In these few lines we have the essence of Fontane's whole philosophy with regard to Junkertum; indeed Mayno calls it his "politisches Glaubensbekenntnis" (1).

We note that in the letters regarding his personal experience of the nobility and still more in his novels, this attraction felt for the human element tends to outweigh more and more his periodic sense of political repulsion. "Die Kerle sind unausstehlich und reizend zugleich", he admits to his publisher in 1881 (2).

Nor does Fontane idealise the rôle of the Junker to the extent of distorting reality. He does not, for example, attempt to deny the very real political and social power that they still wielded in his day, unacceptable though certain aspects of this power probably were to him. He is always a realist, and the use (and sometimes abuse) of wealth, high position, noble birth appear to him as undeniable realities, and as such they must be acknowledged and even submitted to as long as that form of society remains. Doubtless this act of submission was only achieved after long inner struggles, for he was a man of fundamentally independent outlook, and his personal solution was at best a compromise.
"Er denkt realpolitisch", says Wiegand (1), and the unpalatable facts remain acknowledged, without open condemnation or uncritical acceptance. This acknowledgment also finds its expression in the social rôle of the aristocracy in his novels. Where love, for instance, conflicts with the social obligations imposed by birth and rank, it is love which is sacrificed on the altar of duty.

As a 'kulturhistorisches Bild' of 19th century aristocratic society, Fontane's novels are of immense importance, since he employs a sufficiently broad canvas for us to view aristocratic life in all its manifestations - in the towns and in the countryside, in the army, clubs and literary salons of Berlin, at public appearances of state and in the intimate atmosphere of hearth and home. Even the parvenu nobility are not forgotten, and this shadowy hinterland of high society is symbolised in the person of Herr von Gundermann in Der Stechlin.

In this general review of aristocratic life and manners, we note especially the restricted field of choice open to the young noble seeking a place in society. His usual lot is to serve for a period as an officer in one of the more distinguished army regiments,
after which he will succeed his father in the management of the country estates. Compared with his earlier life of comparative luxury in the 'Offizierskasino' of some garrison town, possibly even Berlin, his later existence in the seclusion of his estates is somewhat retiring and austere. For although the Junkers represent a certain style of good living, they are not without their financial problems in the new age of 19th century industrialism, as will be seen.

Occasional variations of this traditional pattern of aristocratic life are to be found in the world of Fontane's novels; Instetten (in Effi Briest), for example, is a highly-placed government official, while Graf Darby (in Der Stechlin), has been a diplomat. These deviations, however, are but slight; a radical break-away from the old tradition is frowned upon by society and its perpetrators are at the best merely tolerated. Von Klessentin, the young aristocratic professional actor in Die Poggenpohls, or von Szilagy, the artist-cum-poet of Der Stechlin, are regarded by their social equals as failures in life.

Temporally Fontane's aristocrats are men of intellect and principles rather than of feeling and imagination, though there are important exceptions
to this general rule amongst the younger generation. In their case, when this balance of reason and emotion is unduly disturbed the result is often a 'Dekadenzerscheinung', as in the case of the younger Graf Haldern in Stine, and the outcome is often disaster. A further general characteristic is the highly-developed sense of responsibility and honour which young and old alike possess to a remarkable degree. As a rule its manifestations are tempered by the added qualities of humanity and deep personal modesty, which prevent the 'Ehrengefühl' from degenerating into those extremes of 'Prinzipienreiterei' which are characteristic of the humourless Instetten in Effi Briest.

Closely linked with honour, in the social sense, is often a high degree of personal sincerity of feeling, at least on the part of the landed Junker, which saves him from the artificialities found in the atmosphere of Kasino, club and salon.

This whole question of the contrast between town and country nobility makes itself felt throughout Fontane's novels. But it is clear that, in his view, the two branches have far more in common than their superficial divergences would at first suggest. Nevertheless the sterling Junker qualities
inherited by the military and bureaucratic nobility of Berlin are often tinged with various negative traits, such as an excess of 'preussische Korrektheit' or artificial social values. Their country relations are saved from these dangers, thanks to their 'Verbundenheit mit der Scholle' which preserves for them a keener sense of reality, blending their Prussian sense of 'Ordnung' and duty with kindlier and more tolerant qualities.

In this connection it is interesting to note that, although Fontane laid such stress on the rustic character of his landed Junkers, he recognised his personal inadequacy to portray them in the everyday setting of their domestic duties on the estates. As Wegner has pointed out (1), Fontane, the city-dweller, has never attempted to show them in technical conversations with their farmers, foresters, hinds or grooms, nor have we in any of the novels a hunting-scene. It must be remembered that Fontane's personal acquaintance with the Junker at home was largely restricted to his family and social life.

Common to both town and country aristocracy is an interest in literary and artistic pursuits, some-
times in the most surprising characters. Not always, it must be admitted, is this interest a profound one; in the society of the period, especially the town society, it was socially useful to be able to converse on cultural topics, a fact which tended to produce a type of aristocratic dilettante. But many of Fontane's nobles do have real talent in this direction; some, like Lewin von Vitzewitz, are themselves amateur writers and poets, others, like Tante Amélie (also in Vor dem Sturm) encourage creative effort in the field of the arts. Many are connoisseurs in one particular branch; for example the Halderns, uncle and nephew, are knowledgable in the sphere of Italian art, and both Instetten and Woldemar von Stechlin conduct their wives with the pedagogic enthusiasm of experts through all the galleries they meet with on their travels. Indeed there is scarcely an aristocratic dinner-party in which the table-talk does not at some point turn to either literature or painting, and on the various 'Landpartien' visits to old churches, castles, etc. are almost obligatory. In Vor dem Sturm these literary 'Einlagen' tend to hold up the progress of the novel, coming as they so often do on the threshold of major events, but in the later works Fontane restrains his deep personal interest in these
matters – a legacy from the *Wanderungen* days – and the discussions of art and literature appear only on appropriate occasions.

In his depiction of the military aristocracy, Fontane was assisted not only by the contacts made, during his travels through the Mark, with the young officer-scions of the ancient families, but also by his intimate personal acquaintance with army life, dating from his service with the Kaiser Franz Regiment. Hence we have a vivid picture of the standards and values current amongst the officer-class of 19th century Germany and of Prussia in particular. *L'Adultera*, *Schach von Wuthenow*, *Irrungen-Wirrungen*, (and to a lesser extent *Ellernklipp* and *Cécile*) all bear witness to his familiarity with and skill in reproducing the language and conversational topics of club and mess. Fontane's noblemen-officers speak for the most part the traditional 'Kasinosprache', with its clipped tones, its generous admixture of 'Fremdwörter', its clichés and banalities; the degree to which these idiosyncrasies appear depend on the character of the speaker. In the case of a sensitive, cultured individual, such as Lt. Botho, this 'typical' element of the mode of speech retires into the background; by contrast his more
'standard' companions in the mess employ the usual brusque parade-ground jargon, half phrases standing for whole sentences and giving an imperious tone to the entire conversation. (1). While there is a certain amount of serious discussion of art, literature and the theatre, especially when in the company of educated civilians of equal social standing, the predominant topics of the mess are frivolous and tinged with cynicism. Their irony has little of the kindliness in it which, in Fontane's view, alone could redeem it. The discussion of personalities usually has a mocking, satirical flavour which justifies the use of the term 'médisance'.

The young officer-heroes of the Berlin novels, whilst being shown as good soldiers and respected members of the mess, tend at the same time to shrink from the wilder extravagances of speech and behaviour that are practised by their comrades (e.g. Schach and the satirical procession, Botho and the unexpected rencontre at Hankels Ablage.) Indeed their mode of thought, their intellectual interests and brilliant conversational powers are so much in advance of the general level of their fellows that Thomas Mann, who knew well the military society of Imperial Germany, remains unconvinced of their verisimilitude, although
conceding their charm as novel-characters. "One is tempted to raise the question", he says, "whether Prussian lieutenants were ever as high-minded as this" (1).

Sharper than the contrast between town and country nobility, or between officer and civilian, is that shown between the older and younger generations. This is brought out most strikingly in the persons of Lewin and Berndt von Vitzewitz (Vor dem Sturm), Waldemar von Haldern, and his uncle (Stine), Botho von Kienacker and Onkel Kurt Anton von Osten (Irrungen, Wirrungen), young Leo von Poggendorf and the General, and Waldemar and Dubslav von Stechlin. Whilst both generations possess the sterling qualities of their kind, the younger men are apt to be less sure of themselves and their mission in life; indeed they display a tendency towards weakness and vacillation. In addition they possess to a far stronger degree than their fathers a deep love of the arts, together with a philosophical, introspective turn of mind. One cannot help being reminded of Thomas Mann and his presentation of the Buddenbrook family.

"Most of them", remarks Wegner, "incline towards an attitude of tragic pessimism, rather like Fontane himself in his youth." (2) From this they seek an escape into the realms of art or in other aesthetic
interests. The older nobles, on the other hand, are always strong characters of firm will, though this does not preclude a certain degree of resignation or doubts concerning life and society. In the case of the main characters, at any rate, their sureness never degenerates into obstinacy or narrow-mindedness, as the person of old Dubslav will suggest. Though he has found a definite philosophy of life based on long experience and tradition, he remains to the end open-minded, tolerant and kindly in his judgments. It is interesting to note also that the older generation bears a larger number of 'typical Junker' traits, though these are never allowed to obtrude to a degree which would result in the portrait becoming a caricature. Moreover, despite their receptivity to new ideas, Fontane's elderly aristocrats retain a certain old-fashioned atmosphere, both in their speech and in their mode of life. This, too, is conferred on them rather as a positive and endearing quality than as a manifestation of reactionary thought. Above all, they possess what Wegner calls "eine frische Natürlichkeit" (1) which contrasts favourably with the shallow and rigid conventions of high society life in general.

The author is clearly drawn towards his older men, despite the intellectual affinity he feels
with the younger generation, and portraits of such elderly Junkers as Dubslav von Stechlin or Herr von Briest are
drawn with the loving care and personal sympathy which
Fontane felt for their originals in real life, although
in the latter his affection was often mixed with what
Petersen terms "der Groll der unerwiSderten Liebe." (1)

His elderly women characters of the upper
classes usually remain more in the background. Generally
speaking, they give the impression of being somewhat
cooler and more reflective by nature. The younger women
of this class all possess highly individual traits and
often form the focal point of the novel (e.g. the Poggen-
puhl daughters, Effi Briest, Christine Holk and Melanie
van der Straaten.) Elderly dowagers and spinsters of
noble birth are subjects of special study. Again and
again they appear in various guises, now as the well-
meaning but reforming aunt (e.g. Tante Schorlemmer in
Vor dem Sturm or the strong-willed Adelheid in Der
Stechlin,) now as the condescending guests at dinner-
parties given by the newly-rich (e.g. Frau Majorin von
Ziegenhals and Fraulein Edwine von Bombst, for instance,
in Frau Jenny Treibel.) In Schach von Muthenow there is
Tante Marguerite, a kind-hearted if muddle-headed woman
who talks incessantly of life at court, mixes up
everybody's name and is very authoritative on the subject of religion and "die Kurche"!

Whilst firmness of character is an attribute of Fontane's Junkers, especially the older men, the majority of them show a remarkable degree of tolerance and open-mindedness. And what of their political outlook? (1) Here we must distinguish between the rôle of the politically-minded Junker in real life, who often aroused such antagonism in Fontane, and the type of Junker portrayed in the novels. Here the choice is largely restricted to the type which Fontane felt worthy to serve as an ideal in this respect, or which at any rate approached that ideal.

While they are all imbued with an intense patriotism, it is not of a narrow or aggressive nature. The blustering, intolerant attitude of a man like von Gundermann (Der Stechlin) makes them feel uncomfortable and they secretly ridicule his clichés concerning social progress, which appears to him as "Wasser auf die Mühlen der Sozialdemokratie". (2). Lorenzen calls him "ein Bourgeois und ein Parvenu, also so ziemlich das Schlechteste, was einer sein kann." (3) The born Junker has a respect for other classes of society and his behaviour towards them is kindly and tolerant.
In Der Stechlin, for instance, old Dubslav, the defeated conservative candidate in the Reichstag elections, stops his coach on the way back from the poll and picks up the tipsy peasant, Tuxen, who has voted against him, and conveys him safely home. This elderly nobleman has, too, a strong social conscience with regard to the need for land-reform, and though he does not at all times agree with the more radical views of Pastor Lorenzen, there is considerable common ground concerning the need for peasants to own their farmland.

The concept of 'throne and altar' remains a very real one for Fontane's Junkers, though the accent is principally on the 'throne'. But the real roots of their patriotic feeling lie not so much in the idea of state or constitution as in their deep sense of 'Volkstum'; like the author, they value people and places before theories and abstractions.

Despite their somewhat sceptical attitude towards formal, parliamentary democracy, the Junkers of Fontane's novels are by no means tyrants or die-hard opponents of the welfare of any class but their own. Their relationship with tenants, farmers, servants, etc. is extremely cordial, and they have a genuine interest in the lives and problems of all those committed to
their care. This "patriarchalisch-heitere Gemütlichkeit", as Servaes terms it (1), produces an atmosphere of sincerity and simple trust between master and servant, landowner and peasant. The older nobles, especially, can address their retainers with complete informality and without any fear of losing dignity or forfeiting an employee's respect. Similarly, these servants who, like those of Sir Roger de Coverley, have "grown grey-headed in their master's service" know that they can express their views with equal frankness, and indeed are often the confidants of their employer in the most personal family problems. Nor is the servant-master relationship in the least blurred by this. Typical of these happy domestic ententes are Berndt von Vitzewitz and Jeetze, Dubslav von Stechlin and Engelke, Graf von Barby and Jeserich, General von Poggenpühl and Johann, some of whom we shall later consider as representatives of a different social class.

As well as with the commoners engaged on the work of their own estates and households, we find this same tact and naturalness of approach towards the ordinary folk in general. Waiters, inn-keepers and coachmen are all treated courteously and with consideration; never do we see one of Fontane's
Junkers bullying or addressing in arrogant tones any of these representatives of the common people. The outstanding example of the deep and sympathetic understanding for the humblest classes which is possessed by these nobles is probably that of Lt. Botho. He is able to feel just as much at home in the company of the old washerwoman, Frau Nimptsch, and the gardener's wife, Frau Dorr, as amongst his fellow-officers in the club or at Hiller's Restaurant. Never at any moment does he let his difference in rank become apparent. For him the chief prerogative of noble birth is the duty of living up to the highest possible standards of conduct towards others.

While Fontane's primary interest is in the personalities of the Junkers themselves, he is also concerned to a lesser extent with their special problems in relation to society and to the new age which was dawning. They are often seriously concerned about the validity of the social structure and its values, partly because the younger men, like Botho von Rienacker, Waldemar von Haldern, and Geerdt von Instetten find themselves in conflict with its precepts and are thus forced to examine them in detail. The doubts of older men, like Dubslav von Stechlin, are more detached and
theoretical, but they too recognise the amount of insincerity and hollow convention which lurks under the surface of established social custom. So they all find themselves forced to bow outwardly to idols in which they have lost belief. Their alternatives are either to reject them openly or to resign themselves to the situation as it is. Those who fight usually find themselves too weak for the struggle against organised society and perish; the only escape for the others is to conform outwardly whilst facing the truth within their own souls, so preserving some degree of inner freedom.

Even more acute is the problem, common to all, of the integration of the nobility as a class in the new society of wealth growing up in Germany since the formation of the Second Reich. In fact the whole story of the Poggenpühl family is based on this struggle for existence in the face of modern economic conditions. They, as members of an impoverished military-aristocratic line, find it increasingly difficult to live in the manner dictated by their social standing in the new era which favours the 'Emporkommling' merchant-class or the rich Jewish financier, and it is only through the help of a wealthy relative that they are able to maintain their precarious façade of elegance.
and gentility. Similarly Herr von Briest is obliged to consider carefully whether or not he can afford a holiday in Italy for the ailing Effi, even though his financial position is by no means as precarious as that of the Poggenpohls. Dubslav von Stechlin’s estates are heavily indebted to the Jewish financier, Baruch Hirschfeldt, and it is only through the generosity and family feeling of his sister that he is able to save them as a heritage for his son. The whole Stechlin family rely on periodic ‘good matches’ to save their ancient fortunes. Most tragically of all, Botho von Rienäcker is forced, upon insistence from his family, to leave Lena and marry a rich cousin for the same reason. Throughout the novels we find this strange contrast between the requirements of high social standing and the realities of a diminishing income. Fortunately these Junkers are helped in their adjustment to this problem by one hereditary characteristic, namely the long tradition of thrift in Prussian noble families, whose possessions have been gradually built up through hard work and rigid economy on the once barren and sandy soil of the Mark. Even in the early years of the 19th century, we remember, Bernat von
Vitzewitz is unable to repair the fire-damage to his ancient home until rescued by the timely advent of a substantial legacy.

More dangerous for their future is the general belief of the aristocracy that the country depended on them for its existence, that they were an indispensable social class. Fontane sees that this is not the case and realises the dangers that would result from a failure to keep up with the times and adapt themselves to be the leaders of the new age. His fears for the future speak through the voice of Pastor Lorenzen in Der Stechlin.

Fontane proposes a double solution of this problem. Firstly the Junkers must keep their roots in the soil of the Mark, even if they are living in the city, away from their native surroundings. By remaining true to those traditions which originally made them great, they will find the strength to achieve the necessary adaptations demanded of them by the new era. Secondly, those continuing to live on their country estates must keep in touch with events in the outer world. It was this idea that he wished to express through the somewhat obscure symbol of Stechlin Lake; in the earlier version it was much more effectively
incorporated in Melusine's hope, at the close of the novel, "...dass Leute da sind, die wissen, was in der Welt los ist." (1).

Finally, it must be noted that Fontane's definition of "Adel" does not correspond exactly with that of contemporary society. In a letter to his wife in 1863 (2) he states categorically:

"Ich verwalte mich übrigens feierlich dagegen, dass das, was ich 'adlig' nenne, bloss an der Menschenklasse haftet, die man 'Adel' nennt; es kommt in allen Ständen vor."

He sees that which was noble in all the classes of society; aristocracy, burghers and even in the 'Fourth estate', the manual workers, who are at this time still struggling for adequate recognition (3). Only in the representatives of the parvenu bourgeoisie does he fail to discover any traces of nobility. Otherwise all classes are of the same intrinsic value, and the man whose aim in life is to leave it with a second or third-class decoration or a title seems to Fontane a pathetic figure. (4). And once again viewing life "like a play...from my theatre-seat, No.23 in the stalls" (5), Fontane concludes that in reality a worthy beggar is as good as a worthy king. "Alles ist nur
Rolte, die durchgespielt wird." (1).

We turn now to the consideration of certain special contributions made by a number of the novel-characters to Fontane's general picture of the aristocracy which has been discussed above.

As Petersen has pointed out (2), in Vor dem Sturm and Schach von Wuthenow we are viewing the aristocracy of the Mark in historical perspective, but in the case of the contemporary novels of the age of Bismarck, we shall find the works divide into two groups. In Stine and Irrungen, Wirrungen the nobility is viewed mainly from the point of view of the humbler classes on to whose life it has impinged, while in Unwiederbringlich, Effi Briest, Die Poggenpohls and Der Stechlin it is shown moving in its own circles.

Special Contributions of the Novels.

Writing on Vor dem Sturm, Fontane outlines his aim as follows: "to present a large number of figures from the Mark during the winter 1812-13, figures such as were then to be found and in their essentials are still to be found there today." (2). It would be difficult to find a more explicit indication of the importance of this work as a contribution to the picture of the Mark, in this case
principally the Junker of the Mark. But the picture is by no means confined to him, ranging as this novel does from country to town, farmhouse to castle, salon to village inn. The thoughts and feelings of all classes during this period are dealt with, and many of the current problems are touched upon, for it is indeed "ein Kompendium des Lebens." (1)

The main purpose the author has in mind is not the development of a plot, but "Schilderung." And, in defiance of the requirements of form and construction, he sometimes devotes a whole chapter to the summary of the life and character of one person (e.g. the Tante Schorlemmer section). As Biese observes (2), "die eigentlichen Stürme der grossen Periode hören wir nur fern brausen."

Occupying the centre of the stage are Berndt and Lewin von Vitzewitz, father and son, and representatives of a typical Junker family. Originally Lewin was planned as the hero of the novel, but as so often happens in Fontane's stories, (e.g. der Stechlin) the older man tends to be the dominant character. It is Berndt who is the leader of the revolt against the French occupation, and in the struggles of his soul between duty to the kin
and his burning patriotic desire to free his country, we see in living form the basic motives of the Junker mentality - Treue, Vaterlandsliebe, Ehre. Even in the characters of his heroes, Fontane does not fail to portray a certain degree of human fallibility and weakness; we discover that Berndt has private motives for revenge which feed his hatred of the French, as well as his altruistic patriotic reasons. When the attack on Frankfurt a/O. has failed, he has to weigh up in his mind, with that introspective, analytical perception peculiar to Fontane's Junkers, which motive has been the dominating one, and to what extent he is guilty of selfish impetuosity.

Lewin, nominally the principal character, is somewhat dwarfed by his father's powerful personality. He has inherited many of the latter's sterling qualities, but lacks his robustness. Where Berndt is filled with a consistent hatred, Lewin feels pity for the retreating French columns, for example. Berndt is a man of the world, but Lewin is quiet and studious by nature. He is brought to the realisation of this difference after his tragic love for the beautiful but headstrong Kathinka who, together with her lover Binski, is one of "die geborenen Sieger des Lebens" (1),
which Lewin is not. His tastes lie in the direction of literature and art, and he is the founder of a literary circle in Berlin (die Kastalia), one of whose sittings we are privileged to witness and which reminds the reader of the part played by Fontane himself in the 'Tunnel'.

Even at a time when turmoil and bloodshed lurk threateningly in the background, Lewin and his friends continue to discourse upon the arts in a manner which strikes the modern reader as well-nigh incredible.

"Gesellschaftsabende, Nachmittagtees, literarische Kränzchen und Theateraufführungen sind in wohltuender Abwechslung eingestreut zwischen die bitterernsten Vorgänge des Tages." (1)

Fontane is more concerned with the psychological effect of his stirring background upon the individual minds of his heroes than in portraying these events themselves.

Shears sees in this rather passive young nobleman, Lewin, a resemblance to Scott's heroes, especially Waverley, since both have literary tastes, both are brave but unpractical in the arts of war, both are retiring by nature and have to pass through the fires of an unhappy love-affair as a necessary prelude to maturity and happiness. Summing up the
character of Lewin, Shears is of the opinion that "he does not act so much as he is acted upon." (1)

Of the women characters, Renate is in many ways the most interesting because so unusual. According to Croner (2) she is "die leidenschaftsloseste von allen Fontaneschen Frauen." Her whole character is centred upon renunciation, and she possesses the cool detachment and aura of chaste piety usually associated with the nun. She is endowed with remarkable powers of perception which enable her to diagnose accurately the psychological make-up of Tubal, "der Mensch ohne Kern" (3), who lacks that essential element of 'Treue' which she herself, as a worthy representative of the nobility of the Mark, possesses to the same degree as her menfolk. She is loyal in her friendship to the humbly-born companion of her childhood, Marie Kniehase, loyal in her affection for her brother, Lewin. As indicated previously, the women members of the nobility are generally depicted as possessing greater powers of cool reflection, and Renate is the arch-type in this direction; she has, says Croner, "eine erstaunliche Objektivität." (4). It seems in many ways a fitting vocation for her that she should, at the end of
the novel, retire to a 'Fräuleinstift', and the reader feels sure that she will find peace and happiness in this atmosphere of religious seclusion.

A very different example of the Brandenburg nobility is Amélie, the elder sister of Bernat von Vitzewitz. She is one of Fontane's earliest portraits of the 'elderly aunt', and a brilliant woman representative of the intellectual aristocracy, foreshadowing in her fearless individuality the emancipated woman of a later age. A product of the half-French atmosphere of the court of Prinz Heinrich, she has carried her intellectual interests, her scintillating wit and foreign grace into the more prosaic sphere of the Mark, and at Schloss Guse has built up a circle which resembles in miniature the ghost of her former glories at the Rheinsberg court. In many ways she serves as a foil to the traditional Märker; her intellectual values are orientated towards France and her literary interests are almost wholly French, with which language her speech is richly interwoven. German authors, and indeed much of German culture and customs are foreign to her, and it is this which deprives her of close spiritual contact with the neighbouring Junker society, whose more typical characteristics are thus brought out
more clearly by contrast.

In Schach von Yuthenow, we need here be concerned only with the figure of Schach himself as a symbol of that phase of decadence through which the aristocracy of the Mark passed prior to the defeat by Napoleon in 1806. Since it is the psychology of a period with which Fontane is here concerned, and since Schach is a representative of that period, he dominates the entire novel. A nobleman and an officer, he is nevertheless in a state of inner bondage; he is afraid of life, afraid of popular censure and bound to the prevailing social prejudices. Moreover his position is complicated by his preoccupation with intense inner conflicts; though a man approaching forty, he is somewhat immature in his development and is hypersensitive in his reactions. "Er ist durchaus, was man eine problematische Natur nennt". (1). Faced with demands from life to which he cannot accede, demands arising from his own unstable nature and irresponsible behaviour, he turns away from life and seeks escape in suicide. Fontane may have intended this enigmatic figure to serve as a warning to the nobility of his day, much as Thomas Mann has shown the middle classes
the dangers of decline through morbid development.

Gathered at the supper-table of Witwe Pittelkow (Stine), Fontane presents a number of aristocratic figures who are all, in some way or another, typical of their class and of the Berlin nobility in particular, but who are at the same time sharply differentiated individuals. Of greatest interest, of course, is the portrait of Waldemar, the young Graf Haltern. At this socially-mixed gathering, he stands apart from his compeers as distinctly as Stine does from hers. A particularly noticeable contrast is that between himself and his uncle, the elderly roué, who behaves with condescending jocularity and a grotesque mimicry of courtesy towards his lower-class hostess, whilst his nephew is amused in a detached, good-humoured and slightly cynical fashion. Waldemar's courtesy, especially towards Stine, whose natural refinement he has instantly recognised, is genuine and unassumed.

Waldemar is again reminiscent of Thomas Mann's younger generation; he is unhappy and aware of a cleavage between himself and the older, more hardened generation of his class. He has their breeding without their robustness and drive. In place of the 'lebensbejahende' qualities of his stock he has a morbid,
introspective hypersensitivity which we may well suspect has merely been increased rather than caused by his injury in battle and subsequent severe illness. With the unerring, sometimes harsh realism of her class, Frau Pittelkow calls him: "ein armes, krankes Huhn" (1). Wandrey suggests that if the sketch of him had been drawn in greater detail, we should have had a male counterpart of Cécile (2).

As well as providing a contrasting field against which the more virile qualities of the aristocracy stand out, Fontane seems to have shared Mann’s fascination for the problems of progressive decadence, and may also have intended Waldemar to serve as a more extreme form of that warning to the town aristocracy which he had previously given in Schach.

Botho von Rienäcker, unlike Waldemar, has the strength and realism of outlook to renounce his private happiness and face up to the demands of life. Yet at the same time, this inner strength is symptomatic of an inner weakness of a different kind. It is a courage ‘faute de mieux’. For the greatest kind of courage would have required him to fight the barren prejudices of society and remain true to his love for Lene, the low-born girl who has captured his heart.
But this he feels himself too weak to do. In his own words: "Es liegt nicht in mir, die Welt herauszufordern und ihr und ihren Vorurteilen öffentlich den Krieg zu erklären." (1) So, whilst triumphing in his struggle for personal resignation, he is surrendering on a sterner field of battle and submitting to the will of established society even though he disagrees with it. In doing so he is admitting his own inner weakness and lack of aggressive powers.

As we have seen in the characters already mentioned, and will see confirmed again in the persons of Holk and Instetten, many of Fontane's aristocrats are recessive rather than dominant by nature. Only the elderly men and the womenfolk possess real clarity of purpose and strength of will. (2) In the case of Botho, the contrast is provided by the figure of his uncle, Kurt Anton, whose vigour and extravert assurance is brought out vividly during the scene between himself and his nephew at Miller's Restaurant. Kurt Anton von Osten is the type of older Junker who, inferior in intellect and artistic sensibilities to the younger town-loving generation represented by Botho, nevertheless stands for the sound and solid qualities of his caste in the eyes of Fontane.
We are left in no doubt about Botho's superiority of intellect and fineness of character compared with both his elders and his fellow-officers. In the scene at the officers' club and during the unfortunate rencontre at Hankels Ablage he stands head and shoulders above them. His delicacy towards Lene in particular and women in general is one of his best features, and his freedom from class-consciousness has already been alluded to. (1) The values of the mess and fashionable salon, with their artificial brilliance of wit, their médisance and insincerity, have no attraction for him. Like Fontane himself, he believes that "jeder Mensch ist seiner Natur nach auf bestimmte, mitunter sehr, sehr kleine Dinge gestellt, Dinge, die, trotzdem sie klein sind, für ihn das Leben oder doch des Lebens Bestes bedeuten, Und dies Beste heisst (mir) Einfachheit, Wahrheit, Naturlichkeit." (2) And these are the very qualities he finds in Lene, whom he is nevertheless obliged by society to renounce. So both he and his beloved, lacking the unusual qualities of will-power and individuality needed for resistance to the force of convention, obey the current social laws. Moreover he is divided within himself, which would make resistance
even more futile. His conscience tells him that society, despite its unreasonableness, is fundamentally right; witness his reflections on receiving the fateful letter requiring a decision concerning his intentions of marrying Kathe - "Ordnung ist Ehe." (1) And so - "das Ende ist milde Resignation, lüdelnder Verzicht." (2).

Kathe, his young wife, is a contrast in every way. A typical aristocratic officer's-wife of the period, she is gay, superficial, undiscriminating in her tastes, spoilt from earliest childhood, and now the darling idol of the regiment. Only Botho sees her shortcomings, as we learn from the conversations of his fellow-officers. Nevertheless they get along fairly well together, although it is to be suspected that this harmony of compromise is largely due to Botho's tact and kindly understanding. She is in many respects the exact opposite of Lene, loving all the customary pleasures of the aristocratic world - dress, riding, social occasions, visits to famous spas, etc. She talks incessantly with, or rather at her husband, though never on any serious topic. Even the admiring young officers of Botho's regiment have to admit: "Sie dabit ein bisschen." (3) Life for her is a comedy and people
its players; her standard comment for all situations, grave and gay, is: "Zu komisch, botho!" (1). Naive, like Lene, she has by contrast enormous self-confidence, and never doubts her charm or powers. The deeper implications of life remain unknown to her. In the company of this aristocratic doll, Botho lives "in keiner unglücklichen Ehe, aber ohne rechte Freude" (2).

The nobility depicted in *Unwiederbringlich* is not that of the Mark, but of the neighbouring German land of Holstein. Graf Holk is a character who does have the courage to flout society, but even he does so in a rather half-hearted fashion. He has something of the "weltmannische" characteristics possessed by the older generation of Brandenburg nobles that Fontane has portrayed, but he is fundamentally a serious and responsible individual who is driven to extremes by the excessive piety of his humourless wife. The view that he is no frivolous roué of the type represented by, say, the elder Graf Haldern in *Stine*, is supported by his inability to cope with the brilliant but temperamental court beauty Ebba von Rosenberg, for whom he leaves his wife, Christine.

In his heart of hearts he yearns for the security of his home and native soil, but, like Schach, he is a character
divided within himself. Part of him desires solid, domestic happiness, whilst the other part hankers after diversion, womanly charms and worldly enjoyment, such as are to be found in full measure in the 'welt-frivolen Hauptstadt' of Copenhagen (1). Eventually he loses both Ebba and his wife, for the latter - a woman of deep and noble feeling despite her 'aristokratisches Herrenhütetum' (2) and self-righteous gloom - suffers acutely under the 'faute de mieux' rôle she plays in their reconciliation and commits suicide. Once again Fontane has paid an indirect tribute to those qualities of order and discipline, loyalty and social responsibility which are a prerequisite of happiness for his characters and are possessed by his ideal Junkers.

Effi Briest is rich in examples of the various types of Prussian nobility. Firstly there is Instetten, the bureaucrat of noble birth, whose 'Para-

gegraphenseele' (3) fits him so well into the civil service. A just and high-minded man, he lacks on the other hand that warmth of affection which alone could have made his marriage with Effi a success. The sense of 'Ordnung', which is such a characteristic of Fontane's nobles, has here become something negative and unbalanced, and it is this extreme preponderance of principle over
feeling which ultimately ruins his life, despite his undoubted virtues. Effi's own words, towards the close of the story, characterise him aptly: "Er hatte viel Gutes in seiner Natur und war so edel wie jemand sein kann, der ohne rechte Liebe ist." (1)

His conversation with Wullersdorf on the necessity for a duel with Crampas not only sheds considerable light on the social values of the period, but also on his own mental outlook and personality. It becomes clear that he is motivated not so much by a sense of burning hatred towards his wife's betrayer as by a sense of obligation towards the conventions of society. He fears that any departure from this norm might damage his 'honour'. So, in the full knowledge that his life will be irreparably ruined, he places the letter of the social law before his own happiness.

"Man ist nicht bloss ein einzelner Mensch," he says; "man gehört einem Ganzen an, und auf das Ganze haben wir beständig Rücksicht zu nehmen, wir sind durchaus abhängig von ihm." (2)

All that remains to the luckless Instetten afterwards is expressed in his own subsequent reflections (3): "In der Bresche stehen und aushalten, bis man fällt."

One could almost admire this man, with all
his faults, for his selfless devotion to principle, were it primarily due to belief in principles for their own sake and not fear of society. But his earlier attitude of coldness, almost indifference to his young wife, his severe educative tendencies through the medium of fear and self-discipline reveal a certain cruel streak in him. He certainly possesses a sense of duty typical of Fontane's aristocrats, not only in his private life but in the conscientious fulfilment of his public duties, yet somehow everything he touches seems to become cold, impersonal and lifeless - even his small daughter, Annie, whom he trains in his own likeness so that she appears as a stranger to her mother on the occasion of their disastrous reunion.

If Schach and Stine were a warning to the aristocracy of the dangers of failing to adjust to society, Effi Briest was Fontane's most open warning to society itself of the peril represented by its own hypocrisy and false conception of honour.

Effi herself, though by no means a typical example of aristocratic womanhood, does possess certain traits which mark her unmistakably as one of her kind. One of her greatest moments is at Bad Ems, where she
receives the fateful letter from Hohen Cremmen whilst in the company of the gossiping, malicious Geheimrätin Zwicker. Despite the tumult of emotions within her mind, she manages to retain her aristocratic poise and dignity until she has gained the privacy of her own apartments, where she sinks to the floor unconscious. How differently would Jenny Treibel have acted in such a time of crisis! Almost a child in years, she is incapable of subduing her mercurial temperament and assuming the grave adult rôle of a baroness. "Die arme Effi Briest, die nicht das Talent besass, eine Euphemia von Instetten zu werden." (1)

Craving for love and protection, she fails to find them just when they are most needed and turns to a man for whom she has no real feeling. Her character is in many respects the exact opposite of that of Instetten. She is simple by nature, though possessing a vivid imagination, is courageous in some respects but afraid of solitude, she is capable of loyalty but has a morbid hankering after the forbidden, and it is doubtful whether her sense of remorse is adequately developed. The keeping of the fatal letters is an action typical of her naive make-up.

Like nearly all Fontane's Prussian aristocrats she has a profound attachment to her native soil,
and seems able to thrive only in the atmosphere of her old home, Hohen Cremmen.

Her chief feature is her extreme youth. "Das Kind", says Schmidt, "wird von der Schaukel weg in die Ehe geschickt." (1). Her remark to her childhood friends after the engagement (of the girl of 17!) to a man of fifty, is a further indication of her immaturity. They want to know if she is sure this is the right man for her. "Jeder ist der Richtige. Natürlich muss er von Adel sein und eine Stellung haben und gut aussehen," (2) is her reply. Inexperienced in the problems of life, she falls an easy prey to the worldly Major Crampas; nor is she endowed with even an average ability to resist such difficult situations: "Kampf und Widerstand sind nicht ihre Sache", admits her mother: (3). And in the unsympathetic background of Kessin, with its formalised provincial social life, and her lonely existence in an eerie, monotonous household contrasting so strongly with her girlish visions of wealth and brilliance, she is doomed from the start.

Much of the responsibility for Effi's disastrous marriage must devolve upon her parents, especially on Frau von Briest who, though possessing much of the charm and grace of Fontane's aristocratic
women characters, tends to be superficial and calculating. Having herself rejected Instetten in his younger and impecunious years in favour of her more solidly-established husband, she now regards him as a 'good match' for her young daughter, despite the latter's obvious immaturity and totally different character. The fact that her action is generally accepted by society provides an interesting sidelight upon contemporary aristocratic social values. One cannot help reflecting that she and Instetten would have had a great deal in common, since she, too, is a person who acts according to 'Grundsätzen'. Her respect for social convention even goes so far as to prevent her from visiting her daughter after her separation from Instetten.

The eventual move to defy society, after its initial requirements have been satisfied, is made largely at the instigation of Herr von Briest, who for once abandons his customary retreat from all controversial matters ("Das ist ein zu weites Feld!") and opens his door to the unhappy girl. In his tolerant and peace-loving humanity we see the faint beginnings of the later portrait of Dubslav von Stechlin.

Whereas in most of the foregoing novels
the accent is on individuals, in Die Poggenpuhls it is on the problems of the class as a whole, the three Poggenpuhl daughters illustrating various points of view held by that class. Despite their reduced circumstances, all three are characterised by aristocratic dignity and a consciousness of family tradition, though in varying degrees and very different fashions.

There is the eldest, is the most tradition-conscious of the three and has assumed the leadership of the family, owing to the timid nature of her mother whom she regards as a Poggenpuhl only by marriage and essentially 'burgerlich' in outlook. Her chief worry is the youngest sister, Manon, whose 'advanced' views and doubtful social connections cause her much vexation. According to Else Croner, she has the combined characteristics of a governess and an aristocratic 'Stiftsfräulein' (1). Therese is one of the very few of Fontane's aristocratic characters who look down on classes of people less fortunately placed, perhaps because of her own insecure position. We note the abrupt change in her attitude towards the young nobleman, von Klessentin, for instance, when she discovers that he is a professional actor, and her continual attempts to keep her mother from associating on too intimate and friendly a footing.
the accent is on individuals, in Die Poggenpuhls it is on the problems of the class as a whole, the three Poggenpuhl daughters illustrating various points of view held by that class. Despite their reduced circumstances, all three are characterised by aristocratic dignity and a consciousness of family tradition, though in varying degrees and very different fashions.

Therese the eldest, is the most tradition-conscious of the three and has assumed the leadership of the family, owing to the timid nature of her mother whom she regards as a Poggenpuhl only by marriage and essentially 'burgerlich' in outlook. Her chief worry is the youngest sister, Manon, whose 'advanced' views and doubtful social connections cause her much vexation. According to Else Croner, she has the combined characteristics of a governess and an aristocratic 'Stiftsfräulein'! Therese is one of the very few of Fontane's aristocratic characters who look down on classes of people less fortunately placed, perhaps because of her own insecure position. We note the abrupt change in her attitude towards the young nobleman, von Klessentin, for instance, when she discovers that he is a professional actor, and her continual attempts to keep her mother from associating on too intimate and friendly a footing
with their servant, Friederike. The funeral of their uncle, the General von Poggenpuhl, is for Therese a "Haupt- und Staatsaktion" (1) at which she is the chief Poggenpuhl representative - her mother and the widow being merely 'angeheiratet', of course! In her love of 'Repräsentation' she is the aristocratic counterpart of Frau Jenny Treibel, though with different motives.

In Sophie, the second sister, we meet again those sterling aristocratic qualities of thrift and industry which Fontane usually associates with the landed Junkers in particular. She is the mainstay of the family - hardworking and practical, using her undoubted talents for the financial support of her mother and sisters, she is able to adjust herself to the reduced circumstances of her family without losing her aristocratic dignity and charm. Noble in character, as well as by birth, affectionate and natural, she is an example of Fontane's own special conception of 'das Adlige', which we have examined earlier on.

Manon, the youngest, is a symbol of the rapprochement between the lower ranks of the ancient aristocracy and the higher spheres of the new upper-middle industrial and business classes, in this instance the Jewish financial circles. A realist in outlook,
comfort and good living are to her more important than rank and titles, and she seeks to promote a 'good match' between her brother Leo and the Bartensteins' daughter, Flora.

Leo himself, and his elder brother Wendelin (whom the reader does not actually meet) continue in the traditional aristocratic path of military service, the former as a young lieutenant and man-about-town, good-hearted but somewhat irresponsible in money-matters, the latter as a serious-minded and brilliant officer with an assured future on the General Staff. They have the first claim on the family since it is they who will carry on its ancient and honourable traditions, and it is this self-sacrificing devotion of the mother and her three daughters to the welfare of the two young men which casts a glow of heroism on to the whole distressed family. They are an example of that "stilles Heldentum" which Fontane ranked so much more highly than popular military glory.

Finally, we turn to Der Stechlin, that last work in which Fontane gave in loosely-constructed form the fruits of his long life of reflection on society in general and the aristocracy in particular.

Although Fontane dropped the original
idea of a type of 'Bildungsroman' in which the nobility as it was would be compared with the ideal nobility as it might be, (1) we do learn of the author's fears for the future of the class as a whole and his love of their more attractive features.

The theme of the novel is built around the figure of Dubslav von Stechlin, whose character we come to know in some detail. Reminiscent occasionally of Berndt von Vitzewitz, and often of old Fontane himself, Dubslav is characterised by his tolerant, humorous and gently ironical outlook on life. Though intellectually of only average stature, he has a sincerity of feeling which leads him intuitively and unerringly to sound decisions. Pastor Lorenzen says of him during the funeral oration; "Er hatte ... das, das immer gilt und immer gelten wird: ein Herz!" (2) This old Junker "mit dem Stück Sozialdemokratie im Leibe" (3), has been described by Frenzel as: "der echte Markr der Fontanesche Mustermensch" (4), and there is every possibility that the novelist intended him to serve as an ideal of the existing Junker, whose very weaknesses in comparison with his solid virtues pointed forward to new and greater possibilities. His outlook on organised society is as broad-minded and tolerant as his political
credo; he recognises the value of submission to law, both social and religious; man is but a tiny part of a huge pattern designed by nature. "In das Gesetzliche sich ruhig schicken, das macht den sittlichen Menschen und hebt ihn." (1).

But just as his political creed of 'Königtum, Luthertum, Adel, Armee' is softened by an ability to see the other man's point of view, so his social outlook is tempered by the tolerance of one, "der hinter alles ein Fragezeichen macht" (2).

Woldemar, his son, once again brings out the differences between the generations. Though by no means a decadent weakling of the type represented by Waldemar von Haldern, he is cast in a gentler mould than his father, has the now-familiar artistic leanings (so reminiscent of Thomas Mann's later specialisation in this field,) and is less certain of his values and philosophy than is his father. Even Dubslav has to admit that he is "ein unsicherer Passagier" (3) and Melusine, more forthrightly says: "Er hat einen edlen Charakter aber ich weiss nicht, ob er auch einen festen Charakter hat." (4). Where his father's open-mindedness is due to tolerance, one feels that in Woldemar it is due to uncertainty, though towards the end when he takes over
the management of the family estates, there is reason to believe that he will develop some of Dubslav's sturdier characteristics in later years.
CHAPTER THREE.

Fontane and the Middle Classes.

1. Fontane has been generally regarded as the writer who detested the middle classes, and while there is plenty of support for this view to be gained from his novels and, more still, from his family letters, it is one that can only be accepted with certain reserves. For Fontane made a distinction between the 'Bürger' and the 'Bourgeois'. The solid, reliable, hardworking qualities of the former he admired, whilst the pretentious hypocrisy of the latter aroused his anger.

"Ich hasse das Bourgeoishe mit einer Leidenschaft, als ob ich ein eingeschworener Sozialdemokrat ware", he wrote in 1891.

We have noted in an earlier chapter that his mother embodied typical middle-class qualities, which we might now class as both 'burgerlich' and 'bourgeois'. She was industrious, conscientious and imbued with a sense of social duty; on the other hand she had an excessive respect for appearances, rank and the power of money - a weakness which was later to become typical of the whole parvenu element of upper-middle class Germany in the Bismarck era. The elements
of this problem were thus present in the very earliest years of Fontane's life. (1)

Then again, the instability of his father and uncle, which led him to complain in Von Zwanzig bis Dreissig (2) of the lack of 'Ordnung' in his early background, must have given him a healthy respect for the 'Solidität' of the genuine middle-class way of life. He says as much when leaving the dubious if happy-go-lucky atmosphere of Onkel August's home to begin his apprenticeship in what he calls "anständige, wohlgeordnete Lebensverhältnisse" (3).

In his own adult life he is constantly torn between this esteem for middle-class security and regularity of life and his personal need for freedom and spiritual independence. One is reminded in some of his letters of the 'Bürger- Künstler' conflict of Thomas Mann. He manages on the whole to effect a compromise between these two sides of his nature, and projects his respect for the virtues of 'Burgertum' into a number of his novel-characters, especially those of lower-middle class origin.

As early as his first novel we meet an admirable example of this conscientious
'Kleinbürgertum' in the person of Frau Hulen, Lewin's landlady, a kindly, hard-working soul who looks after her aristocratic boarder like a foster-mother, takes an interest in his activities and welfare and makes no attempt to extract any undue financial gain from her services. In fact her charges are so modest that Lewin feels compelled to persuade her to accept a considerably larger sum.

The special significance of this 'Einlage' in Vor dem Sturm is that it points forward to the many future portraits of this nature and the whole tone of the Berlin novels.

In the following 'balladesque' novels, Valtin and Grete, the children of middle-class families, display the kindly, unassuming qualities of the 'Burger' as distinct from the hard, grasping ruthlessness of their relatives. Similarly Baltzer Bocholt, in Ellernklipp, shows right up to the time of his tragic lapse that hard-working thoroughness and well-developed sense of social responsibility which represented for the author the finest qualities of middle-class life.

In Mathilde Möhring, industry and determination are carried to an extreme of aggressive vigour by means of which she guides her weak-willed husband,
Hugo through his law-examinations to the mayoralty of a small West-Prussian town.

Perhaps the ideal figure of this class is Alonzo Gieshübler, the Kessin chemist in Effi Briest who, despite physical infirmities, has, through determination and industry, raised himself to a position of professional dignity and has gained social respect by his shy, serious and genuine qualities of mind.

Overshadowing these ideal representatives of the 'Bürgertum', however, are the vast armies of social climbers and industrial parvenus - the 'Bourgeoisie' of the Berlin novels. Chief of these is, of course, Frau Jenny Treibel, though the picture is enlarged by such characters as Van der Straaten in L'Adultera and, in historical perspective, Gerdt and Trud, the grasping, hard-hearted guardians of Grete Kinde whose avarice brings about the death of Grete and the destruction of the town of Tangermünde, the only two completely unsympathetic figures Fontane has created.

Although the problem of the bourgeoisie only really began to make itself felt after the founding of the new Reich in 1871, the discerning eye of Fontane
had observed a number of negative qualities in the middle classes as early as 1848. He has nothing but contempt for their rôle in the abortive revolution of that year; in his autobiographical work, Von Zwanzig bis Dreissig, he notes (1) that middle-class participation in the rising was both cautious and tardy, and comments that the world does not consist wholly of heroes, least of all the bourgeois world. Only after the requests of the masses had been granted did the 'spiessburgerliche Elemente' appear in the open to give demonstrations of joy and congratulate one another on the victory others had won. (2). In an ironical passage of a letter to his wife in 1852 (3), Fontane compares the citizens of the ancient Flemish towns, who fought so doggedly for their freedom and their rights, with the inert, safety-loving citizens of Berlin: "Für unsre feisten Bourgeois muss gedacht und getan werden: der Götte der Bequemlichkeit hat den Gott der Freiheit in den Staub getreten."

During the industrial boom of the 1870's, the object of his dislike was not so much the timid bourgeoisie of these earlier years as the new class of wealthy 'Emporkommingle', whose social sphere verged
on that of the town nobility and whose main characteristic was that which Wandrey has termed "die Geldsackgesinnung" (1). It is doubtful, however, whether this materialism alone could have aroused his ire to such an extent. In fact the power of enormous wealth, constructively employed, excited his wonderment and even respect (2). It is the endless hypocrisy of this new class which irritates him so much. Whilst their real values are purely materialistic, they insist on their claims to culture and all those qualities which Jenny Treibel understands by 'das Höhere' - summarised neatly by Schlenther (3) as "das Romantische, Ideale, Poetische, Ästhetische, Ethische und Epistemische."

It is this hollow pretension, vanity, and false idealism covering a hard-hearted, calculating mentality which Fontane wishes to unmask. He sees clearly beyond the rich façade and finds the wealthy bourgeoisie to be spiritually impoverished, thoroughly egoistic, self-willed, narrow and insincere. Nor is their social arrogance compensated for by any of the finer qualities found in even the poorest examples of the aristocracy. Dresch has drawn attention to the fact that, in Fontane's view, the middle classes suffered by comparison with either of their neighbours; even the humblest classes
had a certain spontaneity of behaviour which the bourgeoisie had lost (1). In his preference for the two ends of the social scale, Fontane has kept for them all his great tragedies and the literary expression of his deepest feelings; the bourgeoisie he was unable to take seriously enough to regard in terms of deep tragedy. His feelings there vacillated between annoyance and ridicule (2). He never allows his feelings to run as high upon the subject, however, as does Strindberg, for example, whose hatred of the bourgeoisie is carried to a degree of fanaticism. Even Thomas Mann treats the problem with greater scepticism and less humour than Fontane. A personal factor may also have influenced Fontane's feelings. The greater part of his own life was, as we have mentioned earlier on, spent in straitened circumstances in which he often hardly knew how to support his family adequately on a meagre income. All around him, on the other hand, was growing up a middle class of newly-rich industrialists and speculators who possessed the means to live a life of taste and beauty, but who, having no vision of such things, squandered their money on lavish ostentation and lived according to an empty cult of snobbery. It is only natural, therefore, that the author's
objective criticism of these people should be heightened into an out-and-out rejection of the whole wealthy middle class.

That there was much more in this attitude than personal emotion is testified to by the later judgment of social historians who agree on the lamentable materialism and bad taste of the new bourgeoisie after 1870.

In the person of Frau Jenny Treibel, Fontane has taken one typical specimen of this class and analysed the workings of the nouveau-riche mentality so profoundly that she has lived on, not only as an example of masterly characterisation, but as a symbol of a whole class and of a whole period. Nor has he fallen into the danger of making her a caricature; she remains a distinct, life-like personality. Once again Fontane has based his creation on an actual person, adding and subtracting qualities at will until a result has been achieved which is both true to contemporary reality and artistically original. Jenny Treibel, née Burstenbinder, the daughter of a humble grocer, pursues a course known to modern psychology as "over-compensation". In reality she is
deeply conscious of her social origin and has learned to respect only one thing - money. This, with the power it has to bring comfort, social standing and security, represents the whole goal of her life. Had she acknowledged this openly, all would have been well, but she must camouflage the realities of the situation by affecting an outward disdain of worldly wealth and a love of culture to the exclusion of all else.

"Trotz Kommerzienrätin und rundlicher Fülle singt sie am Klavier, begleitet von einem alternden Opernsänger, ein Liebeslied, .... das von 'Glück ohne Gold' fabelt und mit den Worten schliesst: 'Ach, nur das, nur das ist Leben, wo sich Herz zum Herzen fändt'." (1). Unfortunately 'heart does find its way to heart' in the persons of Leopold, her son, and Corinna Schmidt, the penniless daughter of her schoolmaster friend. Jenny is transformed in an instant; there is no question of "Glück ohne Gold" and her former sentimentality gives way to a ruthless practicality and cold anger. Corinna, on whom she so recently lavished her affection, suddenly appears "eine Person", and in the house of Professor Schmidt, opposite her old home in the humble Adlerstrasse,
she gives way to her indignation and creates a vulgar scene.

At the end of the novel, when her will has triumphed, Fontane makes her appear, as a final irony, at Corinna's wedding to Marcell, where she is her former gracious, condescending and sentimental self, shedding the appropriate tears, recalling her youthful romance with Schmidt and proclaiming anew her faith in "das Höhere".

The figure of Frau Jenny tends to dominate the novel and overshadow the importance of the other characters who all submit to her will, even Corinna who is her only serious opponent, having a degree of determination which at one point seriously frightens the Kommerzienrätin. As Ettlinger has indicated (1), the novel is essentially a conflict between these two women. All the other figures represent no serious obstacle to her; her husband, the jovial Kommerzienrat with a weakness for make-believe politics, values a peaceful life more than the expression of his own more tolerant views. Leopold is the weakest character of them all and even allows his mother to dictate to him on matters of dress and the number of cups of coffee
he should drink each day.

Professor Wilibald Schmidt, who knows Jenny from her earliest days, has a profound insight into her character and motives but prefers to maintain a detached, scholarly attitude and offers little practical resistance. Schmidt is without doubt the most sympathetic character in the novel and bears some resemblance to Fontane himself, though not sufficient, I feel, to justify the term "self-portrait" which has sometimes been applied to him, any more than Corinna can be claimed to be a portrait of his daughter Mete, from whom he certainly borrowed a number of characteristics for this figure.

The two households of Schmidt and Treibel provide an interesting contrast between the simplicity of lower-middle class living conditions on the one hand and parvenu display on the other. Similarly the sort of visitors who frequent both are highly significant for the social picture of the period. At Schmidt's we witness a 'Lehrerkränzchen' at which a number of schoolmaster-colleagues gather informally to smoke, chat and discuss archaeology. Simplicity is the keynote of this meeting, whilst at Frau Jenny's
home an elaborate dinner is staged over which she presides with great skill despite her humble social origin. The description of this dinner-party is acknowledged as the finest of its kind in Fontane's novels, which abound with such scenes. The conversation moves effortlessly from one group to another, from one topic to the next, with the Frau Kommerzienrätin directing the flow of words with the virtuosity of a great conductor controlling an orchestra. But the conversation is somehow insincere compared with that of the 'Oberlehrerkränzchen'; one senses that the guests are 'making conversation', that they are really bored with the whole affair, with each other and with social life in general. The schoolmaster friends of Wilibald Schmidt, it must be admitted, only come to his sessions when they have nothing better to do, but, once there, they have common interests and the conversation flows naturally. At the Treibels' dinner it proceeds brilliantly but unnaturally; it is developed as a social art and fed by a sense of duty rather than by a mutual interest. Thus the whole dinner-party is a 'Dekadenzerscheinung' symbolising the frequent appearance of similar phenomena of the new society after 1870 which possessed neither the cultural interests
of the aristocracy nor the naive sociability of the lower
classes. We meet this technique of portraying social life
and current values again in Thomas Mann, who has acknow-
ledged his literary debt to Fontane.

Jenny Treibel, the social climber par
excellence, is one of Fontane's least attractive
characters, yet it is significant that even she is not
without redeeming features which can at least command
our admiration if not win our sympathy. Fontane, here
as elsewhere, was almost incapable of creating a wholly
negative character. Probably the only two exceptions
are Gerdt and Trud in the early 'balladesque' novel,
Grete Minde; even Hradschek the villainous innkeeper of
Unterm Birnbaum has attractive features.

If Frau Jenny represents the older
generation of the Berlin industrial bourgeoisie,
Corinna Schmidt stands for the young generation of
womanhood, already on the verge of social emancipation (1).
Common both to her and to Jenny are the qualities of
determination and pride. But in the place of the
Kommerzienrätin's materialism Corinna possesses
imagination, critical judgment and social tact. Not
that she is untainted by the prevailing respect for
wealth; having spent all her early life in an atmosphere of rigid economy and sacrifice, she is at first impressed by the glitter and comfort of the Treibel home. Thus she aims at marrying Leopold purely for the sake of the social possibilities such a match would offer. Spoilt by the adulation of her father and lacking the critical advice of a mother, she is in danger of losing touch with those sound 'bürgerlich' qualities represented by her background. Fortunately, however, 'das Schmidtsche' in her triumphs at the end and she realises the sterling middle-class worth of Marcell, whom she marries. Nor is she lacking in those practical housewifely qualities typical of her class, as we learn from her conversation at the Treibels' dinner-party, where, to impress Leopold, she mentions with apparent artlessness her love of cooking, sewing, ironing, etc. Apart from her obvious immaturity, expressed chiefly in her longing for luxury, she has a number of points in common with her father, but lacks his calm, philosophical detachment from life.

Wilibald Schmidt himself is a kindly, tolerant individual, typical rather of the older generation of scholarly, philosophical Germans than of the practical, mercenary era of the new Reich. Like
Fontane, he preserves a delicate balance between amour and irony, exhibits a number of schoolmasterly traits, and has a keen sense of perception which enables him to analyse Jenny's character for the benefit of Marcell and also, with remarkable detachment considering his strong affection, that of his own daughter. He is happiest in the atmosphere of ancient Greece, and in this love of antiquities reminds the reader of Pastor Seidentopf in Vor dem Sturm. He thus represents an example of Fontane's technique of characterisation by means of a typical hobby or pastime, a technique which persists right up to his last novel, Der Stechlin, where old Dubslav is the proud possessor of a private museum, his speciality being a collection of weather-vanes. As a social critic, Schmidt is sound in his interpretations and concise in his expression of them. What volumes are condensed in his terse analysis of the difference between the aristocratic and the bourgeois mentality when he remarks to Marcell: "In eine Herzogsfamilie kann man allenfalls hineinkommen, in eine Bourgeoisfamilie nicht." (1)

Ettlinger has described this novel in the following terms: "In seiner ungetrübten Lustspiel-
stimmung sticht dieser Roman wie ein Intermezzo aus der langen Reihe der übrigen, fast durchgehens tragisch ausklingenden Werke ab" (1). And indeed humour is, despite the deep underlying irony and social satire, the predominant tone of *Frau Jenny Treibel* - a humour less broad than that often found in the author's correspondence or in some of the short stories such as *Onkel Dodo*, but yet too kindly in tone to be termed caustic wit. It is a good-natured satire of a type likely to appeal to the Berlin mentality. And indeed a whole cross-section of Berlin social life in the period following the Franco-Prussian War is to be found within these pages. Lacking the deep and tragic conflicts of the other Berlin novels, it is pre-eminently a 'Miloruroman' or, in the words of Dresch (2), "un roman épigrammatique."

Although the importance of *Frau Jenny Treibel* is greater than that of any other Fontane novel from the point of view of middle-class values, further aspects of the 'Bürger' are shown in other works.

We meet the Berlin middle classes as tourists on holiday, notably in *Cécile*, and hear them speaking naturally and without their city inhibitions in
the invigorating atmosphere of the Harz.

In Die Poggenpuhls we discover an example of a middle-class woman who has married into the aristocracy. Frau Majorin von Poggenpuhl, who originally comes from a clergyman's family, finds her 'burgerliche' qualities of hard work and thrift of considerable value in the impoverished aristocratic family of Poggenpuhl after the Major's death. In her anxiety to preserve not only the decencies of well-to-do life but also a façade of aristocratic 'Repräsentation', she becomes more and more harassed, more and more unsure of herself, resigned and self-deprecating. Her whole manner of speech is "ein Klagelied der Enttäuschung" (1). Realising that she cannot approach life in the manner of a battle, she sets herself an ideal of humility, lives for others, is thankful for the smallest mercies and is pious and devout in her outlook on life and the universe. One cannot but admire her self-sacrificing industry, even though her character and personality are too negative to make her an attractive figure. That her will-power is insufficient is demonstrated by her treatment of Leo, her irresponsible young lieutenant-son. Whilst fearing his extravagance, she fails to discipline him by means of the purse-strings, increases his egoism by
giving him financial support despite her own plight, and generally plays the rôle of the loving but over-indulgent mother.

Mathilde Möhring, typifying the qualities of the 'Kleinbürgertern', displays an extraordinary degree of objectivity, resistance to life and energetic ambition. In the weak-willed Hugo she has a perfect foil and moulds him as a potter moulds his clay. Their marriage is based on 'Kameradschaft' rather than 'Liebe' and is an unusually successful example of "Wirklichkeits-sinn" linked to a "träumerische Natur" (1). The quality which makes her stand out from her class, whose virtues she represents in extreme form, is her extraordinarily acute knowledge of human psychology.

In the personality of Van der Straaten (L'Adultera) we have a supplementary picture of the rich bourgeoisie already depicted in Frau Jenny Treibel. Essentially well-meaning and kind-hearted, Van der Straaten has a clumsy, awkward manner which offends people, especially his sensitive and aristocratic wife, Melanie. Like Jenny Treibel he loves dinner-parties, lavish display, personal power, but unlike her he has a fundamentally tolerant and forgiving attitude towards
life despite occasional outbreaks of touchiness over small matters. He is thus judged more kindly by Fontane than is Jenny Treibel who represents so much more clearly those aspects of bourgeois life which he detested and wanted to expose to public ridicule.

.................

2. The New Middle Classes; Fontane and the Jewish Problem.

(i.) The social position in the late 19th century.

An intensification of this hitherto only latent problem had been caused by the new influx of Jews from Poland and Russia, and the increasingly important part they were playing in Germany in the spheres of business, high finance and the arts. It was only since 1848 that they had been officially emancipated and they were in fact still looked down upon by the middle classes in general rather as those classes had hitherto been scorned socially by the nobility.

The direct result of the new invasion from the east was the emergence of open and sometimes organised
anti-semitism, especially during the rather ruthless and materialistic Bismarckian régime. One of the strongest seats of opposition was in business-circles, where the Jews were regarded as dangerous new competitors. In literary circles, where Jewish influence had become especially strong, there was often, according to Kohn-Bramstedt, a feeling that the Jew tended to use his intellect as a weapon of superiority and chose this sphere as one where he could satisfy his urge for domination (1). Shared by many middle-class circles was the resentment that Jews could acquire and relinquish nationality at will, having no fixed roots or permanent loyalties anywhere. Thus they were still, despite official legislation, regarded as outsiders by the bulk of the community.

J.W. Parkes has suggested (2) that the overcrowding of the professions and the arts by Jews during this period was partially caused by the continuation of a trend due to the earlier restrictions placed on their entry into other occupations. Carl Busse (3) has attempted an explanation of the enormous Jewish influence in the intellectual life of Berlin at the end of the 19th century, by
supporting the theory that they alone took sufficient interest in scholarship and learning, and had done so increasingly since Romantic times. He refutes the then popular view that their position was largely due to the power of money.

(ii). Representation of the Jew in Fontane's novels.

Jewish characters appear principally in the later novels. In L'Adultera, both main male characters are Jews, but lack any exclusively Jewish traits. Rubekh is drawn rather faintly, in any case, though a certain emphasis is placed on those artistic leanings which made him so attractive to Melanie in the first instance. Van der Straaten is first and foremost a typical parvenu Berliner of the Bismarckian era. Perhaps the only unusual trait which could distinguish him from a multitude of other Berliners of his class is a pronounced fatalism. Otherwise he represents the spirit of the new German middle classes in the early days of the Second Reich - egoistic, self-willed, skilful at business, proud, sceptical, opulent and vulgar in tastes.

In Die Poggenpuhls, the Jewish characters remain in the background of the story and are only presented to the reader indirectly. The rising Jewish
wealth and social standing are represented by the Bartensteins, a banking family. Their wealth and prestige attract Manon, the least traditionally-minded daughter of the Poggenpuhl family. There are also references to a Blumenthal family in West Prussia, with whom Leo has connections. The formidable difficulties which are likely to arise should he desire to marry their daughter have considerable symbolic significance for the social values of the period.

Ebba Rosenberg, the fatal Hofdame in Unniederbringlich who attracts Holk, is half Jewish, but this fact plays no special part in the novel.

Der Stechlin. Here there is somewhat greater emphasis on the Jewish race of two of the characters, namely Baruch and Isidor Hirschfeld, who have lent large sums of money to old Dubslav von Stechlin in order to save his failing estates. The older man, Baruch, appears at the beginning of the story to be thoroughly dependable and a sympathetic character, but later reveals grasping and cunning features in common with his son Isidor, who has never bothered to conceal them. Dubslav's reaction to this sudden revelation is one of
shocked bewilderment; "mit einemmal ist der Pferdefuss 'rausgekommen", he says (1). But he is far from being an anti-semit: in answer to Superintendent Koseleger's remark that he had heard "der Major von Stechlin habe mehr oder weniger einen philosemitischen Zug", he replies firmly: "Den hat der Major von Stechlin auch wirklich, weil er Unchristlichkeiten nicht leiden kann und Prinzipienreitereien erst recht nicht." (2). But, he adds, many of the individual cases he meets with do not impress him at all favourably, for example his new doctor, Dr. Moscheles, and the financier Hirschfeld. Moscheles is politically a radical, with neither sympathy nor understanding for the Junkers. Of similar persuasion is the Jewish lawyer, Katzenstein, who is Dubslav's bitter opponent in the Reichstag elections but who later appears in impeccable mourning and with a large wreath at the old Junker's funeral.

It is interesting to compare these Jewish figures in _Der Stechlin_, especially the usurers, Baruch and Isidor Hirschfeld, with the more extreme picture presented by Freytag and Raabe in _Soll und Haben_ and _Der Hungerpastor_ respectively. Freytag has given us a caricature of a usurer and estate-dealer, Ehrenthal,
who is shown as a grasping, wholly unscrupulous villain, while Raabe has portrayed a Jewish intellectual who uses knowledge exclusively as the means to an end. Such a biased attitude would have been artistically impossible in Fontane.

Apart from the novels, there are two direct references to this subject in his later poems, namely in *Veränderungen in der Mark* (which includes the line: "Gott, ist die Gegend heruntergekommen") and *An meinem 75.* ("Kommen Sie, Cohn!")

(iii). *Fontane's Personal Views Revealed in Letters.*

A. To his friends. Here his comments are, on the whole, more reserved than when writing to his family, but show the mixed feelings entertained on this subject.

Writing to Eulenburg in 1880, he claims to feel an affection for the Jews even greater than that felt for the "Wendo-Germanic" element.... "aber regiert will ich nicht von den Juden sein." (1).

Just after his seventieth birthday celebrations, at which the Junkers, whose praises he had sung for so long, were conspicuous by their
absence, he writes: "Das alte Preussen ... hat sich kaum geruhrt, und alles (wie in so vielen Stücken) den Juden überlassen." (1).

In the same way, he writes to the Gundermanns in 1890 (2), the nobility - 'das alte Preussen' - is leaving all interests of political freedom and national culture in the hands of the rich Jews, at any rate as far as the intellectual life of Berlin is concerned.

These sentiments are echoed in his letter to Ludwig Pietsch of 26. 10. 1897; he is reminded by an article they have been discussing of the inescapable fact "dass das gesellschaftlich höher potenzierte Leben immer nur ein Juden- will sagen Jüdinnenleben gewesen ist." (3). Why is this, he wonders? The conclusion seems to be that no German bourgeois has ever said or thought anything worth recording and the aristocracy has retired more and more from the field of art.

"Wo bleibt der Adel deutscher Nation?", he demands again in 1898, the last year of his life, - "Alle wahre Stütze kommt ... von der Judenschaft!" (4).

B. To his family. In these letters the
references are more forthright, especially in his later years.

Expressing his feelings about the clientele of Carlsbad in a letter to Mete, he begins in picturesque fashion: "In tausend Lichtern strahlend, wirkte es am Abend feenhaft oder doch orientalisch, welche Wirkung durch den Stammescharakter seiner Gäste gesteigert wurde. Ich hatte nie geglaubt, dass es so viel Israelisiten in der Welt überhaupt gibt, wie hier auf einem Humpel versammelt sind .... Ich halte so viel von den Juden und weiss was wir ihnen schulden, wobei ich das Geld noch nicht mal in Rechnung stelle. Aber was zu toll ist, ist zu toll." (1).

But the feature which really arouses his annoyance is the masquerade of different nationalities; "Liest man die Badeliste durch, so findet man, dass bis auf Australien, Uruguay, Buenos Aires und Kapstadt alle Lander und Nationen hier vertreten sind; bei näherer Untersuchung (glücklicherweise nur der Namen) findet man aber freilich, dass sie alle gleichmassig aus Jerusalem stammen." (2). It is not so much the Jews themselves as the insincerity of these pretended origins and loyalties which irritate him, just as any form of 'Heuchelei' always did, and he even uses this
word in the same letter. Significantly he adds: "Die eigentlichen antisemitischen Prediger sind sie selbst." (1).

The rapid flooding of Berlin with thousands of Jews with alien backgrounds and foreign values also distresses him. He has referred to it as "Die Verjudelung Berlins" (2), and even sees a time coming when these newcomers will replace the old aristocracy:

"Die Bredows werden Onkel Bräsig, wozu sie ohnehin eine Naturanlage haben, und strömen und inspektern auf den Cohnshen Rittergütern herum. Eine Vorstellung, in die man sich, wenn man nur den ersten Schauder überwunden hat, ganz ernsthaft verlieben kann." (3). For one who had such a deep love of the old nobility of the Mark this was a very open-minded attitude, even though the speculation was only a humorous exaggeration, and no traces of the bitter anti-semitism of many of his contemporaries can be found in it.

(iv). Summary of his attitude, both in his works and in real life.

Generally his Jewish characters remain in the background of his novels or, if main characters, have practically no specific Jewish traits. With the
very limited exception of Der Stechlin there is no attempt to use the novel as a vehicle for expressing his personal feelings either for or against any aspect of the race. He originally intended to deal with the problem in Der Storch von Adebar but the plan for this work was abandoned.

His real social views on this matter are revealed chiefly in his correspondence. He obviously appreciated many aspects of their cultural value for Germany, especially for the rising capital of the new Reich, and admired many of their other qualities, but did not wish the country to be ruled by them. He was glad that they "wrote newspapers but not history" (1). Politically he was frequently in disagreement with them; practical though they were in business-matters, "verfallen sie politisch sofort der Phrase" (2).

He realised that their wealthier members were taking over more and more the rôle of patron of the arts, a position which he would have preferred to see occupied by the nobility of the Mark, but was appreciative of this service in many ways. Nevertheless his feelings were mingled with a private distaste for many of the personal idiosyncrasies of the race. He
was strongly opposed to crude anti-semitism ("weil das wieder zu dumm und zu roh sein wurde"), (1) but was worried by the increasing and totally disproportionate power of this minority, which he feared would lead to a violent reaction.

He knew that he had a large number of Jewish readers amongst his middle-class public (his ideal aristocratic public never really materialised). Hence his ironical comment in the poem which foreshadows a 75th birthday celebration attended by not one Junker — but a host of Jewish admirers.

Even in his old age, when (as we see from the letters) his views on the problem had hardened somewhat, he retained this large circle of Jewish readers and had many genuine personal friends amongst them, (E.g. Brahm and Schlehtner.)

...............  

3. **Fontane and the Professional Classes.**

(i). The chief representatives of the professional classes in Fontane's prose-works are the clergy. After the nobility, they were probably his
favourites, and they appear in considerable profusion and in many varieties throughout the series of his novels. Some are strictly orthodox, others lax; some are ambitious and worldly-wise, others retiring and contented in country parishes; many are traditional in outlook, a few 'advanced' liberals by persuasion. A number of his most charming portraits of country persons are distinguished by the lovable weaknesses as well as the strengths with which he has endowed them, the former usually in the shape of some antiquarian hobby to which the kindly, easy-going old vicar is guilty of giving greater devotion upon occasions than to the care of souls.

As well as the regular clergy, Fontane is interested in the followers of unorthodox sects, and we meet disciples of the Moravian Brethren (Herrenhuter), 'Konventikler' and even American Mennonites! These are all treated with the same tolerant interest as the Lutheran ministers, perhaps (as Koethe suggests,) "weil hier nichts Abgestempeltes vorliegt" (1), "denn das schreckt ihn immer am meisten."

The sympathetic manner in which these religious figures are treated indicates the respect that Fontane must have felt for their real-life
114.

equivalents, despite the fact that he was a very
frequent churchgoer. As Ettlinger has reminded us;
licher von ihnen trägt die unsympathischen Züge seines
verges... zur Schau." (1).

We think of Prediger Seidentopf, the
fliest of these creations - a 'Tendenzsammler' of
storial relics of the Mark, living in a constant
od-humoured endeavour to outshine the opposing
tories of his friend and fellow-collector Justizrat
rgany, tactful and full of practical help for all
he parish, but occasionally little more than
rfunctory in matters of ecclesiastical ritual.
tante says of him in the text: "Innerhalb der
rche... ein Lauwarmer, hatte er, sobald es
nen und Totenkopfe handelte, die Dogmenstrenge
nes Grossinquisitors." (2).

We remember, too, Pastor Gigas in
ete Kreide whose strictness regarding the least
aces of heresy, even in the young, is tempered by
man warmth. "Er hatte sich aus erbitterten Glaubens-
müden her auch einen Schatz echter Liebe gerettet,"
s the author of him (3).

More tolerant than Gigas is Pastor Soergels
of Ellernklipp, one of the few people in the village who have some understanding of Hilde's unusual temperament, and one member of the community who feels more sorrow than condemnation for Muthe. Rochussen, the newly-deceased mother of the half-aristocratic child Hilde. Like many of Fontane's parsons, he too has his little fads and for some reason has an unusually strong objection to the Revelation of St. John the Divine, plus a weakness for instructing 'Konfirmanden' in the Old Testament stories instead!

Other figures come to our minds - Hofprediger Dorffel, confidant of Cécile, the Seminar- direktor Schwarzkoppen, the friend of the Holk family (Unwiederbringlich), the trusting Pastor Eccelius of Unterm Birsbaum who refuses to believe that the Kradsheks are guilty till it is proved beyond doubt, Siebenhaar the peace-loving clergyman of Quitt who attempts vainly to mediate between the rivals, Lehnert and Opitz, the ambitious Superintendent Koseleger (Der Stechlin) whose orthodoxy is equalled only by his ambition and subservience to authority. Finally there is the most individual of all these church figures, Pastor Lorenzen of Der Stechlin.
Lorenzen has been portrayed in some detail by Fontane and is the only explicitly political parson of the novels. As in the case of Fontane himself, the critics have made determined attempts to fit him in with varying political movements; Spiero associates him with Christian Socialism, K. Peters with progressive conservatism. In the earlier version of the book, Lorenzen (or Lorenz, as he was then called) was more the jovial, anecdote-loving 'Plauderer', but in the final version he becomes more of a political reformer, perhaps as compensation for the otherwise greatly diminished political element in the story. His model in real life was probably a certain court preacher, Wendel, but though Fontane liked to work from a model, the eventual result was of course no mere copy but a highly individual creation. Sincere and forthright, though by no means bigoted or extremist, he is a useful sounding-board for Dubslav's own opinions during their long discussions together, as well as being an interesting character in his own right. His political outlook will be considered later as one manifestation of Fontane's views on this subject.

The semi-religious personages who appear are
almost as numerous and varied as the regular clergy. Compare, for instance, the two Dominae - of Arendsee on the one hand (Greta Minde), kind, gracious and infinitely broad-minded, and of Wutz on the other (Der Stechlin) - hard, austere and intolerant of all worldly failings.

In Tante Schorlemmer (Vor dem Sturm) we have a fairly detailed picture of a Herrenhuterin who has spent many years as a missionary in Greenland and now continues in the Vitzewitz household to live a life of service and to dispense comfort to one and all in the form of her "kraftigende Spruche".

In the humbler ranks of society, too, these semi-religious figures are to be found, e.g. Müller Miekley (Vor dem Sturm), another Konventikler, and Melcher Harms ("Ewig und unwandelbar ist das Gesetz") in Ellernklipp.

(ii). Apart from the clergy, we find several representatives of the scholastic world in Fontane. Chief of these is Wilibald Schmidt, the schoolmaster-Father of Corinna in Frau Jenny Treibel, whom we have already considered in another connection. Here we are concerned more particularly with his appearance as a representative of the schoolmaster's
world. It is during the course of his 'Oberlehrerkranzchen',
when we see him in the company of some of his colleagues,
that he appears most clearly in this light. 'Die Sieben
Waisen Griechenlands' is the title given to this little
circle by Schmidt, and very proud he is of the subtle
play on words it contains.

It is only on rare occasions that the
gathering meets in full strength, since practically
any other claim on its members (including Skat and
theatre-parties!) has priority. Nevertheless each of
these schoolmasters assures the others how vitally
important the 'circle' is to him!

On this particular evening, the attendance
is exceptionally poor, and Schmidt and Distelkamp are
busy speculating on the reasons for this. Professor
Hindfleisch, it is discovered, has gone "in die
Griechische" instead. The reason? He has just made a
frightful howler in class that very morning and has
repaired to the meeting of this learned and respected
body in order to restore his shattered morale.
Emboldened by the reassuring atmosphere of the 'Kranzchen',
colleagues Distelkamp and Schmidt shamefacedly admit
that they, too, have in their time been responsible for
an occasional 'Schwupper', though of course the class
never knew!

Warmed by these little intimacies, they proceed to discuss the other absent members of the 'circle', their domestic embarrassments and scholastic failings. None of them, it seems, can keep proper discipline in class; in any case, the "good old days" of Dr. This and Prof. That, when you could hear nothing but the rustle of the turning pages are, alas, no more.

'Das Schmidtsche!', however, demands at this point that the Professor should disrupt the unity by breaking a lance on behalf of the new generation and exposing the weakness of the old 'Peruckengelehrsamkeit'.

He recalls a certain old pedant whose one weakness was gardening, with the result that all his essay-subjects contained some reference to this pursuit - 'Das Hortikulturliche des Paradieses', 'Die Beschaffenheit des Gartens zu Gesthemane', etc. The topic appeals greatly to Schmidt, who, whilst possessing many pedagogic qualities, has not lost his sense of the ridiculous. "Du hast immer das Auge für das Komische gehabt", observes Distelkamp in mild reproof. (1).

There follows a long discussion on the ethics of teaching, and through Wilibald Schmidt, Fontane pokes fun at the 'Richtigtuerei' and 'Pomposität' (2) of the
older generation of the profession, which he feels is now being replaced by "wirkliches Wissen und Können" (1).

The final topics of the evening - Greek antiquities and recent excavations in Mycenae and the value of historical anecdotes, lead to a series of 'Schmidtiana' which might have been taken directly from Fontane's own correspondence or autobiographical works. "Du warst immer fürs Anekdotische, fürs Genrehafte", says Distelkamp, half admiringly, half in scholarly reproof. (2)

_De Stechlin_ provides us with a pedagogue of a quieter, and less colourful nature - the polite, obliging Krippenstapel, with his historical interests and love of apianry (Mein grossartiger Bienenvater", Dubslav calls him), (3) who looks after the old Junker's private museum and is his intellectual companion.

In the same work we meet a temperamental scholar of Czech origin, the formidable music-teacher, Dr. Wschowitz, who has taken the doctorate for the somewhat unusual reason of avoiding the use of his Christian name, Niels, on his visiting-cards! For Wschowitz is an implacable enemy of everything Scandinavian and of the Danish composer Niels Gade in particular, and his hosts, the Barbys, have to exercise
considerable tact in steering the conversation away from such dangerous topics in the presence of the explosive little doctor. A classical satire on outraged professional dignity is the wordy battle between Dr. Wrschowitz and Professor Cujacius, who enters the forbidden field with unfurled banners of open challenge; proceeding from the Danish painter Melby ("Wrschowitz zuckte zusammen"), (1) he marches defiantly on to the praises of Niels Gade and the scene ends with the mutual exchange of gross insults as, professional dignity forgotten, the white-faced and trembling protagonists vilify each other in the shocked silence of outraged drawing-room propriety — and the secret, malicious delight of their fellow-scholars.

Another effective little portrait is that of the bachelor-scholar given in the earliest novel, Vor dem Sturm, where the reader is introduced to Dr. Paulstich in his somewhat unenviable lodgings with the sullen, inquisitive Frau Griepe. We enter an untidy, cheerless room strewn with old books and literary bric-à-brac, an elegantly bound edition of Novalis lying amongst the cups and saucers of a lately-concluded afternoon meal — with a teaspoon serving as
an improvised book-mark!

(iii). Members of the judiciary make an appearance in several of the novels (e.g. Justizrat Turgany in Vor dem Sturm and Justizrat Bowinkel in Unterm Birnbaum) but are less clearly representative of their profession.

(iv). Finally there are the doctors of medicine, who, whilst they play a less decisive rôle in the story, do possess a number of distinctive characteristics indicative of Fontane's attitude towards the healing profession. Chief of these is Geheimrat Hummschuttel, the benevolent old family physician who has treated Frau von Briest since she was a girl and is now called in to examine her daughter Effi, rather to the latter's consternation, since she has engineered a diplomatic illness to avoid her return to Kessin. However, the worldly-wise old gentleman, who recognises the situation at once, ("Schulkrank - und mit Virtuosität gespielt"), (1) forbears from comment and speculates good-humouredly upon the probable reason for this little comedy, whilst solemnly prescribing a harmless and palatable tonic.

Fontane loved these wise and kindly old
doctors, despite their technical inferiority to the younger generation of state-examined, highly-qualified experts, whose abrupt professional manner he found so intolerable, as illustrated in the comparison between Dubslav's old friend and physician, Dr. Sponholz, and the intolerant young locum from Berlin, Dr. Moscheles. After one brief visit, Dubslav refuses to see him again and the impetuous young revolutionary-intellectual has to nurse his wounded self-esteem all the way back to Gransee with sour reflections on the decadence of high society and the need for "ein Generalkladderadatsch, Krach, tabula rasa."
CHAPTER FOUR.

Fontane and the Lower Strata of Society.

Fontane's interest in the political aspirations of the Fourth Estate will be dealt with separately. Here we are concerned with the author's general attitude towards the humbler classes and his depiction of them in the social panorama of his novels. The genuineness of his interest may be judged by the following excerpt from a letter to James Morris, written by Fontane on Feb. 22nd, 1896 (1):

"Alles Interesse ruht beim vierten Stand. Der Bourgeois ist furchtbar, und Adel und Alerus sind altbacken, immer, wieder dasselbe. Die neue, bessere Welt fängt erst beim vierten Stande an..... Das, was die Arbeiter denken, sprechen, schreiben, hat das Denken, Sprechen und Schreiben der altregierenden Klassen tatsächlich überholt. Alles ist viel echter, wahrer, lebensvoller."

This panegyric, written after perusing Keir hardie's 'Labour Leader', ought probably to be accepted with a certain amount of caution; we have noted before that Fontane, in his letters, was peculiarly susceptible to 'Augenblicksstimmungen'. Nevertheless it does
indicate the liveliness of his interest, even if the
disparaging remarks on the nobility are belied by his
artistic treatment of them. A more balanced and
considered attitude is that represented by the
following passage in a letter to Guido Weiss, written
during the summer of 1889:

"Auch der sogenannte 'gemeine Mann' ist hoch
interessant und voll Mut, Charakter und Freisinn." (1).

As early as the 'Wanderungen' days he writes:
"Verschmahe nicht den Strohsack neben dem Kutscher" (2),
for it was in conversation with ordinary people of
humble origin that he learned so much that was of
value to him in his travels through the Harz. He had
an attentive ear for all classes of people and came
to prefer the naive directness of the villager to the
dull pomposity of the guide-book writer.

So there developed in him a dual interest,
on the one hand in the ancient aristocracy, and on the
other in the simple working people. "In der Nähe des
Thrones und in den Tiefen des arbeitenden Volkes hat
er seine freundlichsten Gestalten entdeckt", observes
Schlenther (3). To this statement should perhaps be
added that his interests 'in the proximity of the
throne' were not primarily in the princes but rather in the Junker and military aristocrat.

In Stine and Irrungen, Wirrungen these two widely separated social classes, the nobility and the workpeople, are brought into contact, illustrating by contrast the strengths and weaknesses of each, and the great difficulties caused by the gulf which separates them. In both novels the scene is dominated by one or more characters of humble origin, and these character-studies show the extraordinary insight into working-class psychology possessed by Fontane.

Although the title would suggest otherwise, it is really Witwe Pittelkow who focusses the reader's attention in Stine. Despite her dubious relationship with the count, this Berlin working-woman has a considerable number of praiseworthy traits and is by no means lacking in character. She is industrious, a conscientious housewife, a good mother to Ulga, and possesses both a firm will and a kind heart. From what we learn of her past history she has had a difficult, even tragic life from her earliest days, but has clung to certain principles of cleanliness and order which Fontane represents as typical of the Berlin woman of humble origin. We hear that she has been a devoted
wife right up to the death of her husband and has since entered upon her liaison with the Count merely as a means of rescuing herself and her daughter from acute financial embarrassment. There is no question of love or even attraction; behind his back she refers to him contemptuously as "ein olles Ekel." But having entered into a form of 'contract' with him, she fulfills her obligations ungrudgingly and even takes the trouble to provide him with a form of 'social life' and entertainment in surroundings where he can relax in freedom from the stiffness and pomposity of high society and its obligations. She makes no attempts to disguise the realities of the situation, but is acutely sensitive to any open allusion to it and rebuffs Graf Haldern severely when, in an unguarded moment, he toasts her as his "Königin der Nacht." (1).

One of her most pleasant features is the sisterly love she bears for Stine. Hard and practical though she may be with others, her conversations with Ernestine reveal depths of affection and sincerity. Nor does she begrudge Stine her lofty ideals; despite her own unhappy lot, she encourages her sister's decent way of life and later tries to warn her of the inevitable disappointments and
heartbreak which will arise from any attempt to bridge the gap between the social classes by marrying out of her sphere.

Pauline Pittelkow must strictly be reckoned as part of the demi-monde, but she is in essence far more than that. She bears many representative traits of the lower-class Berlin housewife of the period, both her virtues and her vices. Her speech is full of typical Berlin expressions, her home (which is described in some detail) is evidence of the prevailing confusion and bad taste of the epoch, while her little supper-party is a masterly sketch of the naive gaiety of her class in moments of relaxation.

A strong contrast is provided by a very different type of lower-class Berliner, Wanda Grutz-macher, the third-rate actress in a suburban theatre. While we gather that her standards are considerably lower than those of Frau Pittelkow, she insists on maintaining a pose of virtue and coyness. This irritates her more straightforward friend who, on one occasion, takes her to task about this "handasche gehabe" and says: "Nein, Wanda, blossom nicht zieren. Immer anständig, dafür bin ich; aber zieren kann ich nicht leiden." (1).
Stine herself is a noble and sensitive character, though possessing less resistance to the hard blows of life than her more worldly sister. Hard-working and conscientious, like Pauline, she has also strong imaginative and idealistic traits. "Zart und keusch" is the description of her given by Else Croner (1). Her modest and well-bred behaviour at the social evening would grace a woman of noble birth and culture, and it is this aspect of her personality which first attracts the young Graf Waldemar, as well as winning the respect of the old roué, his uncle, who also feels this subtle difference in her character and addresses her with a marked courtesy. Similarly when Waldemar later pays her a separate visit, her first thoughts are of the propriety or otherwise of the situation, although, when once convinced of his honour, she has the courage of her convictions to dispense with the formal requirements of convention - a step which, in those times, needed considerable courage.

In her sympathy for the ailing and unhappy young Count, her own personality develops and she acquires a new charm and grace. But, like Lene Kimpitsch, she is realistic enough to regard her deepening affection
for the young nobleman as a delightful but transient phase and hardly needs her sister's warning on this count. Unlike Lene she has the rare and attractive gift of being able to guide both her own and her suitor's feelings into the rarified regions of a sublimated love, thus bringing about no conflict with society.

Yet a conflict does arise on totally different ground, and one that leads to tragedy. Waldemar proposes to her and is determined to break down the ancient barriers of class-prejudice. But whilst society is prepared to recognise secretly a technically immoral relationship such as that of Pauline Pittelkow and the older count, it rejects emphatically such a wholesome solution as this on the grounds of supposed mésalliance. While Waldemar himself fails to see this, or does not want to admit it, the young working-girl, Stine, does, and in a remarkably honest and clear-minded fashion, despite her strong personal attraction towards Waldemar.

As Breton has pointed out: "Elle unit au sentiment la froide raison et la volonté" (1). So she refuses him, and the result of this refusal is tragic for both; the catastrophe she fears is replaced by one
infinitely worse. Nevertheless, in taking the step she
did, she showed a greater appreciation of social
realities than did the young Count. She just cannot
visualise herself being accepted by society as the
Gräfin von Haldern, and in this she is right. Nor
can she see Waldemar being happy in isolation from
his own class, in America, for example, as he hope-
fully suggests. "Der gesunde soziale Instinkt des
Mädchens wehrt sich gegen den idealistisch-überspannten
Traum." (1).

A very different sample of lower-class
Berlin society is provided by Frau Polzin, Stine's
landlady. Fontane, as one who had had wide experience
of life as a tenant, was particularly skilful in his
portrayal of landladies, both good and bad. (N.B.
Even in Vor dem Sturm, where one of each variety
appears - Frau Hulen and Witwe Griepe.) Frau Polzin
is definitely an unattractive character; tight-fisted,
inquisitive (she even listens at Stine's keyhole when
she hears the arrival of a male visitor!) and utterly
callous, as witnessed by her indifference to Stine's
plight at the end of the novel. Though, according to
her husband, her own past will not bear too close an
examination, she displays an officious zeal in
superintending her tenant's behaviour and is obviously disappointed at finding her blameless. "Eine schmutzige, berechnende Kupplernatur", Else Croner calls her (1).

Her only attractive feature is her loyalty to her husband, the Teppichfabrikant, of whom she talks incessantly. Indeed she shares this characteristic with a good many of her class (E.g. Frau Schmolke in Frau Jenny Treibel.)

In Irrungen, Wirrungen, the other novel in which the lower orders of Berlin society play a leading part, it is primarily Lene who dominates the scene. But she can hardly be said to be typical of the vast majority of her class, since her conduct and outlook suggest a world of culture and 'Bildung'. From the conversation we gather that she is an adopted child of Frau Nimptsch, and there seems every reason to speculate on the possibility of her having come of aristocratic parentage (2). She is a woman of sensitive feelings, infinite delicacy and complete selflessness; a fine example of nature's own aristocracy. At the same time she shares the typical industry of the working-class Berlin woman and her joy in the simple pleasures of life. It is the latter facet of
her character which attracts Botho so strongly, since these small pleasures are lacking in the stereotyped life of the aristocratic officer which he is forced to live.

Like Stine, she is repelled by anything suggestive of grossness and insincerity and suffers acutely during the unfortunate rencontre at Hankel's Ablage, where she is suddenly forced to associate on equal terms with a number of women of doubtful reputation whom Botho's fellow-officers have brought with them.

Her unselfishness is demonstrated not only in her attitude towards Lt. Botho, upon whom she makes no claims or demands for permanence, but also in her touching solicitude for her aging mother. Like Stine again, she holds realistic views of society and its power, and gives up Botho without apparent struggle and with no suggestion of tearful reproaches. That she is still deeply in love with him may be seen from her emotional reaction on unexpectedly meeting him in the company of his aristocratic young wife. Touching, also, is her complete frankness, not only with Botho but with her subsequent suitor, Gideon Franke, to whom she confesses her love for the young
nobleman at the risk of losing her prospects.

Whilst possessing the solid, homely virtues of the best representatives of her class, together with their directness and simplicity, Lene is too individual a character to be considered a typical member of one social class.

Frau Dörr and Frau Kimptsch, however, whilst possessing individual characteristics, are far nearer to the average of their social environment. The former, wife of a market-gardener, has also at one time been in love with a young aristocrat, and views Lene's relationship with the tolerance of her class. As if to offset her tight-fisted husband, she is an extremely generous person, whilst at the same time she admires the careful, economical business-instincts of her spouse. As in the case of other Berlin women, she talks incessantly of him and lives largely for him. (C.f. also Schmolke and Polzin.)

Frau Kimptsch, Lene's mother, is a true "Mutter aus dem Volke", and her attitude to Botho is also maternal. Though aged and somewhat old-fashioned, she accepts the happiness of the young couple without question and she and Botho spend many a happy hour in conversation by her fireside, when nobleman and
washerwoman, youth and age, ignore the gap between them and talk with an effortless sincerity which is one of the most moving secondary features of the novel.

Though it is primarily in Stine and Irrungen, Wirrunzen that the lower strata of society appear in the foreground for lengthy periods, there are a host of other minor characters in the novels, each one of which adds something to the composite picture given by Fontane of the ordinary work-people in both town and country.

Not every aspect is covered, of course. The industrial proletariat is scarcely mentioned, for example, since Fontane had little if any personal contact with this new section of society. His characters are drawn most freely from the ranks of valets, servants, coachmen, grooms, landladies, gardeners and peasants. These figures weave their way in and out of the main plot, sometimes appearing at length, sometimes scarcely noticed, but almost every one of them, when studied separately, is a complete and individual character, as well as the representative of a class.

In the earliest work, Vor dem Sturm, we
observe the friendly relations of master and servant under the old patriarchal system (or the aspect of it illuminated by Fontane,) namely in the persons of Lewin von Vitzewitz and the family coachman Krist, who is treated on comradely terms by his young master and, in return, feels a personal devotion to him. Like Fontane, Lewin does not "scorn the straw-filled sack beside the coachman" and he listens with an attentive ear to the tales of the old retainer. Old Jeetze, too, the family servant and butler, is shown in the same sympathetic light, drawn though he is in fainter outline.

In the village inn we meet four farmers; Kallies, Kümmeritz, Keetzke and Krull, learn something of their lives and mode of thought, their views on politics and their country's plight. We are also introduced to Müller Miekle, the first of the series of 'Konventikler' Fontane has drawn.

A village landlady, Witwe Griepe - inquisitive, surly and impressionable by turns - appears, and one of the earliest sketches of a woman from the Berlin lower classes is given in the person of Frau Zunz, the old crone who is invited to Frau Hulen's petit-bourgeois supper-party merely to forestall her
curiosity and spiteful gossip.

Finally there is Hoppenmarieken, the ugly dwarf-woman, who acts as village messenger and lives in the tumble-down quarter reserved for outcasts and tramps, "eine Art stabilgewordenes Zigeunerlager." (1). Sly and dishonest though she is, she nevertheless plays an important part in rescuing Lewin from French captivity and thus shares that sense of patriarchal loyalty so universal amongst Fontane's country-folk.

The two 'balladesque' novels, Grete Minde and Ellernklipp, contain two rather more sketchily-drawn servant-characters, Regine (Grete's old nurse) and Grissel, a simple, pious, hardworking soul who, though subject to moods of obstinacy and resentment, has a genuine love of the orphan-child, Hilde, and is responsible for her early religious education.

Another Krist, this time the caretaker and general factotum of the castle at Wuthenow, appears briefly in the story of Schach and we see once again how free and natural the master-servant relationship can be on these old family estates in the Mark. Schach's orderly, Kaarsch, strengthens this impression, inasmuch as his officer even discusses with him the problem of marriage, which is weighing so heavily upon his mind,
and listens patiently to the old soldier's homily, when he says: "Mein Vater selig sagte man immer: heiraten is gut, aber nich heiraten is noch besser." (1)

Hannah, the personal maid and confidante of Franziska in Graf Petofi is possibly the clearest example of the intimate, friendly relationship which Fontane liked to see existing between employer and employed. She addresses her mistress as "Du" and "Schatz", talks to her naturally but without offensive over-familiarity, shares with her her experiences at aristocratic gatherings, discusses the Count's proposal (of which she is the first to learn) and, with typical devotion, follows her mistress to her new home in Hungary, where she continues her faithful service. Hannah also illustrates Fontane's view that simple folks often see things more clearly than their intellectual superiors, for, when the advisability of Franziska's marriage with the elderly Count is being debated, she raises the significant objection: "Er ist alt und du bist jung" (2) and has thus naively put her finger on the one factor which more than any other leads to the subsequent catastrophe.

At Count Petofi's castle in Arpa, we also meet an early example of Fontane's beloved gardener-
characters, the paternal Toldy, whose lost child causes such general concern to the aristocratic family, again demonstrating that close link between noble and commoner on the big estates which appear in these novels.

The portrait of the gardener in Graf Fétöfy is superseded in L'Adultera by a much more convincing example, old Kagelmann, described in the text as the typical specimen of his class - "unfreundlich, grob und habsuchtig" (1). The only person to whom he is polite, indeed expansive, is Melanie. They hold a highly significant conversation on the subject of marriage and unfaithfulness just before the fateful scene "Unter Palmen" between Melanie and Kubeln.

L'Adultera also introduces another of Pontane's 'faithful servants', namely Christel, Melanie's personal maid who, once again manifesting the sound common-sense the author attributed to persons of her class, endeavours to persuade her mistress not to leave her husband and family. She expresses her convictions in simple, direct language and draws upon her memories of a similar crisis in a family with whom she had previously served, pointing out the moral of its happy ending. "Ich bin ja bloss solche alte, dumme Person," she says in humble earnestness, "aber die
Dummen sind oft gar nicht so dumm." (1) Fontane himself might have been speaking in this summing-up of her class.

One minor character of Irrungen, Irrungen remains to be mentioned in this general category, namely the anonymous coachman who takes Baron Botho on his long drive to the cemetery where Frau Nimptsch rests. It is a portrait which may well serve as a literary monument to the race of Berlin horse-cabbies, now a part of history. Slow, somewhat gruff in speech, his horse underfed, he is full of tales of woe and misfortunes in his trade to which Botho, with not a trace of class-superiority, listens with serious interest. In the town, as well as the country, relations could, it seems, still be patriarchal.

Apart from Herr Mützell, the waiter at Treptow, who, in his frank discussion with Leopold of customers and their tips, affords an insight into a new sphere of Berlin life, the chief representative of the serving classes in Frau Jenny Treibel is Frau Schmolke, the Schmidt's only household help. In the late-night scene following the fateful excursion to Halensee, it is Frau Schmolke who dominates the
conversation rather than Corinna, her mistress. In her reminiscences of the late Schutzmann Schmolke ("Schmolke sagte immer...") we have a portrait in miniature of a whole married lifetime, and her emphasis on the good man's belief in "Proppertät und Strammheit und Gesundheit" (1) confirms an impression we receive over and over again of the general, peculiarly German lower-class adherence to 'Ordnung' in all its forms. Again we note the complete informality of the social relations between these two women of such different backgrounds and the degree of intimacy which prompts Corinna to confide in Schmolke her secret engagement to Leopold. In this connection we may note also the servant's frank and psychologically correct remark: "Glaube mir, Marcell wäre besser gewesen, denn ihr passt zusammen" (2). It costs Corinna herself much anguish and humiliation to discover this simple fact which the uncomplicated mind of her humble servant-woman has realised intuitively.

The novel Quitt provides a well-balanced contrast of peasant servility and calculation on the one hand, with inflated self-importance and arrogance on the other. Frau Menz, the mother of the
hero, Lehnert, represents the former attitude of mind. A cringing, wheedling character in the presence of authority, her whole mentality is hinged on the question of personal gain, and her speech is "die Sprache der Unfreien und Hörigen" (1). To Pastor Siebenhaar, as she flutters around him, offering chairs, opening and closing windows, and curtseying frantically, she represents the survival of an earlier generation of serfs. Compared with the more rugged independence of the Märker, this Silesian peasant-woman serves as an admirable foil. (C.f. also Frau Möhring, the miller's daughter in *Kathilde Möhring*.) Her opposite in the novel is Förster Opitz, also of peasant stock, who has compensated for his inferior social origin by means of borrowed authority, as an over-zealous and bullying minor official. A man of rather coarse tastes and narrow, bigotted outlook, he yet shares that mental attribute, common to most of Fontane's simple folk, of conscientious orderliness and sense of duty.

*Die Poggenpohls* and *Effi Briest* furnish us with two more excellent examples of the "treue Dienerin", Friederike and Roswitha. Roswitha shows a touching personal affection for the unfortunate Effi, staying with her during the hard times which follow
her separation from Instetten, and providing a contrast with the other servant, Johanna, who is equally devoted to Instetten and shares his adherence to the strict observance of 'Korrektheit'. Roswitha's pathetic little letter to her former employer, begging for Rollo, the dog, to be sent to her mistress as company in her loneliness, is a jewel of its kind and moves even the cool-natured Geert von Instetten to admit the truth of Wüllersdorf's verdict; "Die ist uns über" (1).

Friederike has the same attachment to her employers, the impecunious Poggenpuhl family, whom she continues to serve with the same loyalty as in their more opulent days. She is accepted as part of the family by all except the eldest daughter, Therese, who is unusually class-conscious for a Fontane heroine of noble birth. "Fraulein" Therese is merely respected by Friederike; the other daughters she loves. They and their mother share all the family problems with their servant who, with the natural tact and delicacy of nearly all the author's creations in this sphere of life, respects their confidences and takes no advantage of her privileged position. Her character-analysis of the three daughters is masterly and demonstrates again the native shrewdness and intelligence possessed, in
Fontane's view, by the bulk of her kind.

Lastly, the contribution of Der Stechlin to the picture-gallery of lower-class life, must be mentioned, for it is a particularly varied one. The early creation of hoppenmarieken (Vor dem Sturm) reappears in modified form as the village crone, "die alte Buschen", Gendarme Uncke is spiritually akin to Förster Opitz, having the same peasant suspicions of everybody, self-importantly jotting down notes in public and finding every remark "zweideutig". In an earlier chapter reference has already been made to Tuxen, the drunken peasant whom Dubslav von Stechlin rescues from probable death through exposure and with whom he chats as amiably as if he were his own aristocratic kith and kin.

The two masterpieces are the elderly servants, Engelke and Jeserich, "... träumerisch-celeste Namen für die gebleichten und stillen alten Silberputzerseelen" (1). Both old retainers are in a state of complete harmony with their masters; the years of service have brought about a deep mutual understanding, almost identification. Both are the confidants of their employers and are free to speak their minds on family matters as if they were related by birth. Jeserich,
living in Berlin, is slightly more conscious of the new aspirations towards recognition held by the Fourth Estate and, at one point, even says to Graf Barby: "Man is doch am Ende auch ein Mensch" (1). But there is no real suggestion of discontent in this placid soul. Indeed, as Petersen has pointed out (2), the lower classes of society are never shown as being in a state of ferment or class-bitterness, but always in a quiet harmony with the aristocratic families whose interests they serve. There is only one passing reference to class-grievances in the servants' conversations in Der Stechlin, namely the allusion made at the house of the Barbys' coachman to the unsatisfactory living-conditions of maidservants in Berlin ("Das Hängebodenproblem"). Fontane's social conflicts are largely those of the aristocracy within their own circles; the problems of the proletariat appear only by implication. He likes to feel that the old patriarchal world of the 'kleinstadt' is carried over into the new and growing 'Kleinsestadt' Berlin. "Fontane sient noch nicht in der Stadt den proletarischen Herd," concludes Soergel (3). Firstly nobility, then the bourgeoisie appear as the centre-point of his novels; the Fourth Estate, though they appear in large numbers do so rather as individuals
than as a class, their lives and personalities are usually bound up inextricably with the class they serve. Their rôle is "halb die Rolle des altgriechischen Chors, halb die des maîsons im modernen Theatersinne" (1), and the inevitable confidential talks between employer and retainer are "Fontanesche Perlen". He was as much at home in the speech and thought-processes "below stairs" as in the officers' club or at society dinners, and it is where these two worlds meet that his virtuosity stands out most clearly.

...............
CHAPTER FIVE.

Fontane's Political Views and their Relation to His Novels.

The fact that politics as such did not occupy a central position in Fontane's novels should not lead us to underestimate the part they played in the author's life and way of thinking. His letters are full of references to current political events and he remained till his death a keen follower of day-to-day developments in the public life of his own country in particular and the rest of Europe (especially England) in general. In a letter to Kietz he once wrote: "Imitten meiner Krankheit bin ich das Interesse fur die Politik nicht los geworden" (1). Moreover it would be difficult for any writer to treat social problems without impinging upon the political sphere, and the background of Bismarckian Prussia sets the whole tone of many of the novels. Current events and well-known public figures are frequently referred to, even though they exert little direct influence on the story. It is in the belief that the relationship between Fontane's political development and his work
as a social novelist is such an intimate one, that it is felt necessary to sketch in some detail the main trends of his political thought. This point of view is supported by the evidence gleaned from a comparison of his letters and autobiographical works on the one hand with the material of the novels themselves on the other.

His first political crisis in adult years was the abortive revolution of 1848, which he lived through at the centre of events, in Berlin. At that time a young man and strongly influenced by the Herwegh Club, he was inclined initially to take an enthusiastic part in the revolt, then, undergoing a sudden revulsion of feeling at its folly, he stood aside and watched events with a critical detachment.

He noticed especially the reluctance of the German people to copy the French example of ruthless fratricidal bloodshed and their relieved return to their normal, orderly and disciplined lives when the minimum of their very moderate demands had been met.

"Unsere Leute sind nicht darauf eingerichtet, sich untereinander zu massakrieren", is his comment in Von Zwezirig bis Driessig. (1).

Nor did he believe in the permanence of this
apparent victory and referred to it as "kein von seiten des Volkes errungener... Sieg, sondern ein blosses königliches Unadengeschenk." (1). It was no proof of popular power at all. "Volkswille war nichts, königliche Macht war alles." (2).

Likewise the subsequent constitution did not seem to him to be representative; it was not a product of the people themselves, but a ready-made affair foisted upon them - "eine oktroyierte Verfassung". Fontane comments: "Es ist immer misslich, wenn die Freiheitsdinge mit etwas Oktroyiertem anfangen" (3).

At the same time, as he admits in Von Zwanzig bis Dreissig, Fontane held that an ordered, well-disciplined minority representing law and order could always control the unruly masses, provided that they believed in their mission and took effective, energetic steps in time. His sympathies, too, were curiously divided. Whilst a people struggling for its freedom had his theoretical support, his sense of order was outraged by the idea of an undisciplined mob defeating an organised army. "Ein Zwergensieg gegen Riesen verwirrt mich und erscheint mir insoweit
ungehörig, als er gegen den natürlichen Lauf der Dinge verstösst" (1).

Later in life these views were modified. Commenting on this fact in Von Zwanzig bis Dreissig, he concedes: "Ein aufständisches Volk ist schliesslich doch notwendig stärker als die wehrhafteste geordnete Macht" (2). On the other hand, he was sufficiently a realist in these matters not to create within his political philosophy an idealised myth of the broad masses which is so often the weakness of the zealous reformer. Nor is he misled into a false sense of security by the wealth of fine sentiments expressed at the popular assemblies of the 1848 period. He is at first distressed and later cynical concerning the vague if high-sounding generalities spoken at the meeting of his district. Attempting to bring the assembly down to earth, he reminds them that they are not there to debate the value of the Hohenzollerns or of world freedom, but simply to elect a representative. As a result of his speech he finds himself, somewhat to his secret consternation, personally elected as 'Wahlmann'! With characteristic humour he records in later years: "Dies war mein Debut auf
dem Wollboden, zugleich erstes und letztes Auftreten als Politiker." (1).

At the assembly of elected 'Wahlmänner' he finds the same atmosphere of unreality, and on the basis of these two experiences he is forced to conclude that "naive Menschen sind immer führungsbedürftig." (2)

Already we notice the duality of his feelings, between sympathy for popular rights on the one hand and a respect for established law and order on the other, the same conflict that we find in the novels in another form, namely between the rights of individuals and the claims of the social law.

Here too, as in so many of life's problems, Fontane seeks a solution in compromise. "Wer diese Kunst des Kompromisses nicht kennt ..., kann sich begraben lassen", he writes to Metz in 1893 (3).

Progress should, in his view, be integrated with the best traditions of the existing order. Later, whilst in France, he comments on the horrors of revolution and contrasts the state of affairs in that country with those prevailing in England. "Diese klugen Englänner!" he exclaims, "Sie haben genau dasselbe getan, aber sie haben eines vermieden: das Brechen mit der Tradition." (4).
Wegner sums up this aspect of the mature Fontane's political philosophy as follows: "Fontane war seinem Wesen nach zu nüchtern und zu historisch kritisch, um auf die Dauer zu verkennen, dass wahrer Fortschritt nur in der Bindung an die Vergangenheit möglich sei." (1) His attitude in the novels towards the problems of aristocracy, bourgeoisie and fourth estate demonstrates no point of fundamental disagreement with this interpretation of the author's views.

Quite apart from their rôle in revolutions, his feelings towards the broad masses of the people are somewhat complicated. He acknowledges their biological supremacy in the human race: "Die Menschheit fängt nicht beim Baron an, sondern nach unten zu, beim vierten Stand", he writes. (2) But he believes in social discipline; the most extreme pronouncement on this subject is in the poem Festes Gesetz und fester Befehl, where we read:

"Freiheit freilich. Aber zum Schlimmen führt der Kasse sich selbst Bestimmen, Und das Klügste, das Beste, Bequemste, Das auch freien Seelen weitaus Genehmste

heisst doch schliesslich, ich hab's nicht mehl:'
Writing in 1878, he asserts that "Massen sind immer nur durch Furcht oder Religion ... in Ordnung gehalten worden." (2). Neither 'Bildung' nor the effects of military service can replace this need for a strong authority. In fact the introduction of compulsory schooling and army service have rather endangered the security of the state than enhanced it. "In beiden hat sich der Staat...eine Rute aufgebunden" (3). The former (schooling) has produced what Fontane calls "Halbbildungsdunkel", the latter has taught the masses the use of firearms and military organisation, so providing the nucleus of 'Arbeiterbataillonen'.

Contrasting with this accent on discipline, Fontane is more than prepared to admit the positive qualities of the fourth estate: "Sie vertreten nicht bloss Unordnung und Aufstand", he writes (4), "sie vertreten auch Ideen, die zum Teil ihre Berechtigung haben und die man nicht totschlagen oder durch Hin¬kerkerung aus der Welt schaffen kann." The new developments in the outlook and rising cultural niveau of the workers meet with his enthusiastic approval; "Millionen von Arbeitern sind gerade so
Perhaps, in view of this rather fulsome praise at a time when the wide gap between the classes and their cultural levels was only just beginning to narrow, it is necessary to remind ourselves that, when writing to his family, Fontane was strongly influenced by the mood of the moment. On the other hand, his considered opinions, which were those he brought to bear on the composition of his novels, varied within a much narrower range than those expressed in his letters. Nevertheless there are certain unmistakable inconsistencies in his political views, both in the novels and in the letters. These cannot all be satisfactorily explained away and must be accepted as a frank weakness of the man as a political judge. For does he not himself refer to his political opinions as being of "etwas wackliger Natur"? (2). Thus it is that in this sphere writers on Fontane have been at such variance with one another, each consciously or unconsciously seeking to identify the novelist with his own personal viewpoint and branding him as anything from a reactionary diehard to a revolutionary radical.

A sphere of particular conflict was that
of the rival merits of democracy and a patriarchal, enlightened autocracy. In *Von Zwanzig bis Dreissig* he states his view of the former when he says:

"Eine Regierung hat nicht das Bessere, bzw. das Beste zum Ausdruck zu bringen, sondern einzig und allein das, was die Besseren und Besten des Volkes zum Ausdruck gebracht zu sehen wünschen" (1). Note the qualification - not the will of the masses but of the élite of the people. Mere majorities are for him no criterion, and he refers to them as "das Dummste, was es gibt" (2). His private estimation of the majority system may be deduced from his attitude towards the election of 1890, when he went to vote for the first time in years and was so uncertain in his feelings that he decided the question "durch Knöpfe-abzählen"! (3). Again in 1898, the last year of his life, he writes despairingly: "Diese ganze Wahlkrempel kann unmöglich der Weisheit letzter Schluss sein" (4). But, it must in fairness be added that he conceded in the same letter that the system seemed to work in England and America, where (unlike Prussia) no background of force existed to make the whole thing an officially-tolerated mockery. "In England hatte es
imper eine Freiheit gegeben, in Preussen nie", he had previously observed in Von Zwanzig bis Dreissig (1); this he now confirms: "hinter einer Volkswahl muss eine Volksmacht stehen; fehlt die, so ist alles Wurscht" (2). In politics as in art, Fontane was a realist.

His objections to the radicals are based not so much on their theories, some of which are entirely acceptable to him, as on their practical weaknesses. In his diary (3) he comments on the attempt of the sick Emperor, Friedrich III, to put into practice his liberal views and encourage their acceptance by a fundamentally anti-liberal government. "Die liberalen Intentionen waren gewiss die besten und es mag dahinge stellt bleiben, ob Preussen (All-Deutschland schon schwieriger) nicht nach einem solchen Program zu regieren gewesen wäre". He would in fact prefer the institution of liberal reforms from above ('von oben') and adds that the nobility, clergy and official circles could themselves supply sufficient liberal elements to outweigh the 'old guard', without the necessity for recourse to radicalism through mass-movements.

The radical party-members were regarded with distrust by him; he mentions them frequently in
his correspondence and usually in disparaging terms. Writing to his son Theo in 1866 (1), he rejects these "Fortschrittler" because of their complete "Regierungsunfähigkeit". Two years later (1868), he again writes that they are "schlechte Politiker, weil schlechte Diplomaten und womöglich noch schlechtere Menschen- und Preussenkenner" (2). Nor is the atmosphere of democratic parliamentary government, in Fontane's view, calculated to bring out the best in men: "Dies parlamentarische Politikmachen verdirbt den Charakter und macht einseitig" (3).

Influencing him towards the ideal of an enlightened despotism was his experience of the pathetic inability of unorganised masses to run their own political lives (c.f. 1848 experiences.) "Volker verlangen Bestimmtheiten und Befehle", he writes in 1888 (4). Against this, is his personal experience of the nature of bureaucracy and his realistic perception of the corruptibility which is apt to do the Footsteps of those in high places: "Das Regieren ist ein schmutziges, miserables Geschäft", he admits in 1859 (5). And the state itself is, in his opinion, "eine total konfuse Maschinerie", when viewed as a modern bureaucracy (6). Even in its most efficient
manifestations, it suffers from an excess of those "staatliche Korrektheiten, die uns in der ganzen Welt so verhasst gemacht haben" (1), and whilst conceding his admiration for its achievements, he has to admit: "dass er mir sympathisch ware, kann ich nicht sagen" (2).

So, whilst remaining doubtful of the efficacy of popular government, he has equally to reject absolutism: "Der absolute Staat mag noch so viel Vorzüge haben, er ist für ein freiführendes Herz doch eine Unerträglichkeit" (3).

Throughout his life these opposing tendencies towards and reactions from both democracy and enlightened despotism continued, first one, then the other gaining the ascendency. As far as it is possible to judge from his letters and novels, the balance of power seems first to have been on the side of democratic thought (whilst at Leipzig under the influence of the Herwegh Club), later reacting towards the adoption of "altpreussische" sentiments at Berlin after 1848. Then, in the later years of his life, there was a return towards the idea of democracy tempered by patriarchal influences and led by the more progressive elements of the aristocracy. (Witness Der Stechlin, especially the earlier version.)
Apart from the letters which record his day-to-day feelings on the subject, it is mainly to Der Stechlin that we must turn for his political views, especially the considered and mature views of his old age. It is not a political novel as such, contains no definite doctrinaire programme, but embodies nevertheless many of the author's tentative political sentiments.

Old Dubslav, like Fontane himself, has many points of sympathy with liberalism, but not with the liberal party. He is surprised to discover that his patriarchal views on land-reform correspond with those of the radicals, and he is not afraid to visualise the day when princes and radicals will gather together under his manorial roof. From such a fusion of the class-interests only the best elements will eventually survive; the new freedoms will blend with the ancient virtues: "frei aber nicht frech" is his motto.

Representing the 'old guard' is his half-sister Adelheid, the Domina von lütz, who defines the new conception of political freedom thus: "Was heisst Freiheit? Freiheit ist gar nichts; Freiheit ist, wenn sie sich versammeln und hier trinken und ein Blatt gründen" (1).

In the earlier, unpublished version, the
political element was much clearer, and in a letter to Paul Schlenther (1), Pontane refers to the book as "ein kleiner politischer Roman". Here there were lengthy political discussions between Dubslav and Pastor Lorenz (Lorenzen of the second version) where both agreed on the need for an overhaul of the old system: "Das Alte soll sich verjüngen" said Lorenz. (There were also violent heckling-scenes at the election, with cries of 'So is es' and 'Schnautze!')

In the final version, two motifs stand out as symbols of the age; firstly the election theme, in which old Dubslav's defeat is a symptom of the decay of the nobility's political power, and the death of the old aristocrat, which symbolises the passing of an epoch.

Another political symbol which was clearer in the first version is that of Stechlin Lake and its legendary 'roter Hahn' which, in a fashion striking the modern reader as somewhat obscure, stands for social revolution.

Militarism. Though the author of a large number of ballads glorifying the old warrior-heroes of Prussia, Pontane is a forthright opponent
of modern militarism, (as will also be seen in his attitude towards Bismarck). "Das aber, womit am ehesten..... gebrochen werden muss, ist der Militarismus", he writes in a letter of 1897 (1).

The whole rising spirit of aggressive nationalism, as distinct from national unity and self-respect, is alien to him. Writing to Otto Neumann-Hofer in 1896 on the subject of the prevailing 'Borussismus' and 'Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles' in certain authors, he comments: "Das eine wie das andere macht mich nervos." (2). "Der jetzt in unserem Lande blühende Borussismus ist sehr wenig nach meinen Geschmack", he confides to James Morris in 1898. (3).

With alarm he notes in 1897 that "das welt- und lebenskluge England" (4) is becoming infected with the growing rearmament-fever, for he sees that although nobody seriously believes in a European war, the trend of events will render it inevitable. "Je grossartiger der Vernichtungsapparat, je grösser die Verantwortung und die Sorge" is his warning (5).

Despite his great love of the mark, he turns in a moment of despair to other sources of inspiration, free from the worship of "Strammstehen und Finger an die Rosenmont" - to Oberammergau, Bayreuth,
munchen and weimar, whose gods are those of peace and
culture (1). For to him it is not force which is
decisive, but the power of ideas and ideals.

International Politics. Fontane's polit-
ic interests ranged far beyond the limits of the mark,
and those of Germany itself; to the end of his life
he had a keen eye for European affairs, especially
those of his beloved England, for which his affections
remained undiminished despite many points of political
disagreement in the 1880's and '90's. During his
early visit to that country, his political impressions
had been somewhat confused. He had experienced little
sympathy for demonstrations of popular sovereignty,
such as election-crowds or heckling, and felt that, in
view of the enormous social differences in existence,
our profession of liberty and democracy must be partly
due to the traditional British hypocrisy. The distinc-
tion between social and political equality escaped him
entirely. On the other hand he did realise and appreci-
ate the individual's freedom from summary arrest and
the fundamental liberty of the person obtaining in
England. In later years his understanding of British
politics deepened considerably. He sympathised with
England's imperial problems, foresaw the eventual independence of India (1), warned his English friend Morris of his country's vulnerability through the scattered nature of her possessions (2), and pointed out the danger which the aspirations of the new, united German Reich presented to the other European powers (3). Incidentally, he was aware of the perils which a European war and its aftermath would present to the newly-created Reich, especially of renewed particularism, the loss of Alsace-Lorraine or both East and West Prussia, and the emergence of a new and hostile Polish state. (4).

One of his most astonishing predictions was in a letter to Morris (5). As yet, he says, world politics are still in the hands of kings and governments, free from "leidenschaftliche Volksempfindungen": he concludes, "sprechen aber erst diese mit, so werden wir furchtbare Kämpfe haben, nach deren Abschluss die Welt und die Landkarte anders aussehen wird als heut". Bearing in mind the tragic events since 1914, one must concede that Fontane's vagueness in internal party-politics was replaced by flashes of acute vision in the international sphere! The remark, too, sheds considerable light on the duality of his feelings.
concerning popular government and may help to explain the persistent conflict between his political sympathies which exist in such works as Vor dem Sturm and Der Stechlin.

His Criticisms of the German People and their Character.

It must not be thought, because of Fontane's intense love of his native Brandenburg and its people, that his critical faculties were lost beneath a vast wave of emotional enthusiasm. Again and again we find passages in his correspondence which suggest that Fontane's love of the land was the affection of a man who sees both the strengths and weaknesses of the beloved. "Ehrlich ist der Märker, aber schrecklich. Und dass gerade ich habe ihn verherrlichen müssen!" he confides to a friend, comparing his own people with those from other parts of Germany (1). He is especially irritated at times by the 'Wiehtigtuerei' of the Berliner (2) and his vulgar 'Schaubedrins', as for example on the occasion of the old Emperor's death (3). The growing self-importance of the military caste of the new Reich is another target for his criticism;

In his view a lieutenant is just a lieutenant and
nothing more. The attitude that every officer is a kind of demi-god must give way to common-sense reality (1).

The Germans as a whole appear to him as deficient in the social graces. He bemoans their egoism and lack of courtesy: "Dieses Fehlen jeder Spur von Kavalierschaft in unserem Volksgemüt ist das, was uns so unbeliebt macht." (2). Or again, in 1880: "Die Deutschen, mit ihrer ewigen Ordnung, kann ich nicht als das Ideal der Schöpfung ansehen" (3). Compared with the other peoples of Western Europe, they seem to him to be devoid of "Heiterkeit, Liebenswürdigkeit, gute Laune, Plauderhaftigkeit und bon sens" (4), and one of his characters (Prof. Wilibald Schmidt in *Frau Jenny Treibel*) admits ruefully that there is a disturbing connection between 'Teutoburger Wald und Grobheit' (5).

German patriotism seems to him to be mixed with baser feelings: "Überall guckt das Eselohr der Eitelkeit, der Wichtigtuerei, der Ordenssucht heraus" (6).

It is not necessary to conclude from such statements as these that Fontane was in any way a renegade or a 'Franzosenschwärmer' on account of his non-German ancestry. He was intensely fond of his
native Prussia, felt himself to be wholly German, and viewed Franco-German relations almost entirely from a Teutonic standpoint. It is merely that the same artistic detachment and cool appraisement which he cultivated in his works applied to his political views and his private life in general. Like Goethe, he fused his love of country with a wider 'Europäertum'. Similarly, 'das Schöne' always took precedence over 'das Nationale' for, in his view, "dem Nationalen haftet immer etwas Enges an" (1).

"Nationaler Chauvinismus, Überschätzung des eigenen und Unterschätzung jedes anderen Volkes ist ihm fremd", is the summing-up of this problem given by Mayne (2). Similarly Fontane himself, through Pastor Lorenzen in Der Stechlin, condemns "die naive Neigung, alles Preußische für eine höhere Kulturform zu halten" (3).

Thus it is that we find in the political discussions of his novels, usually introduced casually as dinner-table topics, there are nearly always speakers of opposing viewpoints, the one regulating the excesses of the other. Fontane's sentiments are usually a blend of both. He was "sowohl-als-auch" in politics as in life. It is almost as if Fontane realized with a shock the
volume of praise he had bestowed upon Prussia in his Wanderungen and the kindly portraiture of his novels and, consciously or unconsciously, sought to balance this by the sometimes severe criticism contained in his letters.

Never did his undoubtedly powerful patriotic impulses express themselves in outbursts of bombast or even formal eulogy. 'Feierlichkeit' in the realm of personal feeling was always abhorrent to him. This divides him from, say, Liliencron or Wildenbruch, whose patriotism is something "Hochgestimmtes Festliches" as compared with Pontane's, which is essentially 'burgerlich' (1). It is rooted rather in people and in past history than in the contemporary politics of the Second Reich.

Summary. An attempt to summarise Pontane's political views under a label either on the basis of the scattered and rather vague references in his novels or of the more explicit but sometimes contradictory utterances in his private correspondence, is bound to be a tentative and inconclusive one. Certain limits may, however, be defined.

1. The writer of this thesis feels bound to
disagree with the attempts which have been made to identify Fontane either with ultra-conservatism on the basis of his admiration for the Junkers or revolutionary radicalism because of his reforming zeal. Variable though his views are, especially in the letters, the total impression left is that of a progressive conservative or tradition-minded liberal, both terms being used without reference to their modern party-connotation.

2. He was not a party-man, despite his sympathies for certain aspects of various party-programmes. "Ich kenne nichts Öderes als Partei, Partei", is his verdict in Von Zwanziger bis Dreißiger (1). In this view he appears to have remained consistent throughout his life. His nature was too independent to be tied to any rigid party-doctrine.

3. His ideal appears to have been a synthesis of authority and freedom, representing the middle course of constitutional reform. This is what he understood by his own special brand of 'liberalism'.

We will allow Fontane himself the last word on the subject: "Meine politischen Anschauungen - allerdings zu allen Zeiten etwas wackliger Natur - haben sich meist mit dem Nationalliberalismus gedeckt... In meinen alten Tagen bin ich immer demokratischer geworden." (2).
Fontane and Bismarck.

When Fontane was taken prisoner by the French in 1870, the matter was brought to the notice of Bismarck who secured his release by vouching for his good faith - and, characteristically, threatening severe reprisals if his request were refused! References to Fontane in this letter to the French government show how indirectly the Chancellor knew Fontane; he called him a "well-known historian" and a "harmless scholar".

There was little personal contact between the two men. Fontane sent Bismarck copies of his works as they were first published but, receiving no acknowledgment, he later allowed this custom to drop. It seems unlikely that the Chancellor ever read his novels and there is no record of his ever having made public reference to them.

Bismarck in Fontane's Novels. The Chancellor never appears personally in any of the novels and often is not mentioned by name, though it is clear who is meant. He is usually introduced casually as a topic in one of the characteristic dinner-table conversations, and the tone of these conversations reflects firstly, the changes of viewpoint on the part of the educated public towards Bismarck and secondly, the progressive changes
in Fontane's personal attitude towards him. The novels are never used as a vehicle for propaganda either for or against the statesman. Usually both points of view are included or any extremes of dislike on the part of a character are softened by an indication of the speaker's shortcomings or personal grievances.

A whole series of 'Bismarckfrondeurs' appear in the Berlin novels. In L'Adultera they are represented by Legationsrat (ironically called 'Negationsrat') Duquede, and the opposite point of view is put forward by Polizeirat Reiff. Van der Straaten, who is in reality also a supporter of the Chancellor, contents himself with sly encouragement of the argument which provides him with much secret amusement. (1).

For Reiff, Bismarck is no "Kanonier mit ewig brennender Lunte" but a peace-loving statesman who only makes war when it is absolutely unavoidable; nor is he the gambler that he is sometimes said to be (2). But Duquede refutes this view and condemns Bismarck as a speculator of unusual luck - "ein stupendes, ein nic dagewesenes Glück." (3) In his opinion the Chancellor is far too highly esteemed, ('überschatzt' - Duquede's favourite word and one which
is symptomatic of his whole mental outlook.) His phenomenal success is due simply to his plagiarism of other parties' methods and slogans. He is a conservative statesman in name only, says Duquede; behind the mask lurks a dangerous revolutionary radical. In short, he is nothing but a "falscher Hitter", whose banner is "die schwarze Piratenflagge" (1).

In Cécile, the opposition to Bismarck is represented by Geheimrat Hedemeyer, ("hager, spitznasig, suffisant"). Again it is an indirect attack; he talks of "Prinzipienlosigkeit" and "eine Politik von heut auf morgen", and gradually leads up to his main point; "Wir schwellen in einem unausgesetzten Götzenn und Opferdienst". "Was wir haben, heisst Omnipotenz," he says; "...die Omnipotenz eines einzelnen". Hedemeyer deplores especially the loss of free expression of opinion under the Chancellor's régime. (2).

Botho's uncle, Kurt Anton von Osten, is a 'Frondeur' of a different type. (Irrungen, Irrungen). In the previous cases one may suspect a personal grudge or sense of injured vanity, but not so here. His is the frank opinion of one of Bismarck's own fellow-Junkers, and he talks slightingly of the doubtful status of "die Bismarcks". In particular he condemns
the Chancellor's "revolutionäre Massnahmen" and contrasts him unfavourably with Manteuffel, finally dismissing him as a "Federfuchser" who is ruining Prussia. (1).

The presence of Bismarck is felt in the background of the social and political conversations in both Brieß and Der Stechlin, even though he does not receive special mention.

Fontane's Private Views on Bismarck.

These may be gleaned from his letters, and it will be noticed that his feelings fluctuate considerably between admiration and repulsion.

Letters to his friends: writing to Eulenburg in 1881 (2) he calls the Chancellor a "despot", but concedes that this may be a matter of necessity, since, if he had followed the parliamentary ideal of rule by majority...."so hätten wir überhaupt noch keinen Kanzler und am wenigsten ein Deutsches Reich."

On the other hand, Fontane sees that all is not well: writing to Eulenburg a month later (3), he adds; "Gegen Bismarck braut sich allmählich im Volk ein Wetter zusammen. In der Oberschicht der Gesellschaft ist es bekanntlich lange da. ....Er
tauscht sich über das Mass seiner Popularität." Whereas he had previously enjoyed the confidence of millions, hundreds or even thousands of his supporters were now deserting him each day. People still respected his genius but not his character, since it had now become known that he had a petty nature. "Er ist ein grosses Genie, aber ein kleiner Mann." (1)

The same sentiments are contained in a letter to Friedrich Pitte (1891), which refers to the causes of Bismarck's fall from power: "Dieser Riese hat was Kleines im Gemüt, und dass dies erkannt wurde, das hat ihn gestürzt." (2)

To August von Heyden, in 1893, he expresses his feelings at some length: the gist of his objections to the statesman is contained in the following excerpt;

"Er ist die denkbar interessanteste Figur. ...aber dieser beständige Hang, die Menschen zu betrügen, dies vollendete Schlaubergertum ist mir eigentlich widerwärtig, und wenn ich mich aufrichten, erheben will, so muss ich doch auf andere Helden blicken. Dem Zweckdienlichen alles unterzuordnen, ist überhaupt ein furchtbarer Standpunkt, und bei ihm ist nun alles noch mit so viel Persönlichem und geradezu hässlichem unter-
mischt, mit Beifallsbedürftigkeit, unbedingtem Glauben an das Recht jeder Laune, "jedes Einfalls und kolossaler Happigkeit." (1)

On the eve of 'Bismarck Day' in 1895, Fontane writes that he is more concerned with his "new friend" Klaus Störtebeker, than with the old statesman! But he can see certain points of contact between the two - "Beide waren 'Sturzebecher' und ein Schrecken ihrer Feinde.... Nur war Bismarck nie 'Likedeeler'. Er behielt immer möglichst viel für sich!" (2).

Letters to his family: It is mostly in his correspondence with Mete, his daughter, that Fontane discusses political problems and there are several references to Bismarck in these letters.

Writing to her in 1884, he mentions two recent speeches made by Bismarck, both of which he has found great pleasure in reading. "Wenn er niest oder Prosit sagt, finde ich es interessanter, als die Redeweisheit von sechs Fortschritten!" (3). This admiration for the man as an orator is one that remains.

In June 1891 he happens to be in Kissingen just before the arrival of Bismarck, and notes the degree of respect which the great statesman still
commands there. "Ich freue mich darüber, ohne dass die Bedenken schweigen", he adds (1).

Another letter to Mette, in 1894, deals both with the statesman's fall from power and with his own rather mixed feelings towards him:

"Bismarck ist der größte Prinzipverächter gewesen, den es je gegeben hat, und ein 'Prinzip' hat ihn schliesslich gestärkt, besiegt - dasselbe Prinzip, das er zeitlebens auf seine Panne geschrieben und nach dem er nie gehandelt hat. Die Macht des hohenzollernischen Königums war stärker als sein Genie und seine Hoglei. ...Wo ich Bismarck als Werkzeug der göttlichen Vorsehung empfinde, beuge ich mich vor ihm; wo er einfach er selbst ist, Junker und Reichshauptmann und Vorteilsjäger, ist er mir gänzlich unsympathisch" (2).

It is with regret that he concludes in 1895 that the 'Bismarck Day' is only a shadow of what it might have been, but feels that Bismarck himself is to blame. "Diese Mischung von Übermenschen und Schlauberger, von Staatsgründern und Pferdestall-Steuerverweigerer, ...von Heros und Keulhuber, der nie ein Wassertropfen getrübt hat, erfüllt mich mit gemischten Gefühlen und lässt eine reine helle Bewunderung in mir nicht aufkommen. Etwas fehlt ihm, und gerade das, was recht
Résumé. It is clear from Fontane's letters that his feelings towards the Chancellor contained a definite duality, the earlier enthusiasm being replaced in later years by an increasing emphasis on the statesman's personal weaknesses. In particular, Bismarck lacked, from Fontane's viewpoint, those kindly, tolerant and peace-loving qualities which he praised in his last novel, Der Stechlin. During his earlier years in office, Bismarck appeared to be a traditional Junker who also possessed a particularly broad outlook and a noble vision of German unity towards which he worked without respite. Towards the end of his period in power, he manifested other and less attractive characteristics which repelled Fontane and many others with him.

It is possible, as Dresch has suggested, that Fontane recognised in Bismarck certain qualities reminiscent of the "barbaric splendour of ancient Germany" (2), but the novelist was not able to reconcile such manifestations with the political needs of 19th century Europe. He rejected entirely the cult of discipline in vogue during the
post-1870 Bismarckian regime, with its accent on duty and obedience, though he had acknowledged the value of such qualities in earlier periods of German history. As Dresch has put it; "Il voulait moins de hauteur et plus de droiture" (1).

Bismarck's armed peace appalled Fontane. Whilst he had sung the glories of the warrior-heroes of the Mark's early days, he detested modern militarism in all its forms (2) and feared the consequences for Germany which could arise from Bismarck's aggressive policy.

One must therefore reject the view advanced by Roethe (3) that Fontane saw in Bismarck not only the hero who had given Germany her unity but also his greatest ideal of the "märkischer Junker". His letters and the sentiments expressed in such works as *Der Stechlin* have disproved this.

R. Park has claimed that the novelist regarded the 'Iron Chancellor' as the symbol of an epoch and that "beneath the material glamour of the age of Bismarck, Fontane's keen eye saw the slow crumbling of a 'Lebensstil'" (4); this interpretation would certainly appear to be justified by the temperament and behaviour of many of the chief
characters in the 'Berlin novels', whose confusion and vacillation suggest a period of transition and uncertainty.

Fontane's views on this question seem to correspond with those of many of his contemporaries, especially Freytag, Raabe, Spielhagen and Gutzkow. They all condemned Bismarck's encouragement of the materialistic spirit after 1870 and his creation of an armed peace. Nor was his new Reich their ideal of a true German unity.

In his autobiographical work, *Von Zwanzig bis Dreissig*, composed towards the end of his life, Fontane goes so far as to deny that the "phenomenal triumphs" which Bismarck did nevertheless manage to achieve were due solely, or even principally, to his own genius. It was the idealism of the German people which made them possible: "Es geschah... vor allem dadurch, dass er seine stupende Kraft in den Dienst der in der deutschen Volksseele lebendigen Idee stellte." (1) He concludes: "So wurde das Deutsche Reich aufgerichtet und nur so!" It is only in his valedictory poem, *wo Bismarck liegen soll*, that he recaptures for a brief instant his earlier enthusiasm.
CHAPTER SIX.

Special Social Problems; Fontane's Views on Love and Marriage.

Some of the social problems in which Fontane was especially interested have already been indicated, as for example his concern about the future of the aristocracy, the relations between the nobility and the upper-middle classes, and the need for less social hypocrisy (especially on the part of the bourgeoisie.)

But the chief social problems which occupied his attention and which came to dominate so many of his novels were those caused by difficulties in the sphere of love and marriage. In some respects this is rather a surprising phenomenon since, apart from his wife Emilie, women do not appear to have played a very large part in the life of Theodor Fontane. Indeed one gains the impression that he was either deprived of, or indifferent to feminine society in his youthful years, and this feeling is strengthened by such remarks as the following, which occurs in a description of his trip to Norderney in 1883:

"Die alte Dame war sehr verbindlich gegen mich. Was früher die jungen Damen an mir versäumt haben -"
Debating the reasons for this, he suggests significantly: "Die jungen fühlten..., dass Liebe nicht meine Force war." (1)

Similarly, when discussing with his wife the motivation of Graf Petöfi, he admits frankly:

"Im übrigen weiss ich sehr wohl, dass ich kein Meister der Liebesgeschichte bin; keine Kunst kann ersetzen, was einem von Grund aus fehlt." (2)

All this suggests a lack of interest in the problems of love, or at any rate a very limited amount of first-hand experience. Then suddenly one comes upon such a panegyric on the sublimity of love as that contained in a letter of 1875 to his wife:

"Ich konnte ein hohes Lied schreiben über die Erhabenheit, die Herrlichkeit, die Wonne, die Wunderkraft der Liebe, und zwar nicht Phrasen, die ich hasse, sondern Empfundenes." (3) It hardly seems possible that the same writer is saying this! But the following lines leave us in no doubt, with their heated attack on the sham emotions which pass as love in bourgeois circles: "Ich liebe Liebe", concludes Fontane, "aber ich gucke sie mir an und prüfe sie auf
ihre Echtheit."

His attitude is, therefore, rather that of the observer, of the scholar who is intent upon assessing intrinsic values and examining problems, than that of the writer of romantic or passionate temperament who will depict scenes of great emotion. The unusual absence of these traditional scenes, it may be added, is part of Fontane's highly individual charm, though in all probability there was every justification for his own suspicion that it was this factor above all others which limited his contemporary reading-public. As a man, Fontane was capable of deep emotion, but as a writer he eschewed sentimentality.

It is altogether a remarkable phenomenon - a writer whose favourite themes are the problems of marriage and irregular unions, and yet who deliberately avoids anything resembling either a normal love-scene or a passionate intrigue!

Much of the material for his themes was borrowed from real life (especially in Diirer and L'adultere), but the resultant characters are neither copies nor lifeless abstractions typifying certain problems, but living, individual personages. Interested though he is in the problematic aspects, the characters
still come first.

The problems he deals with may, for convenience, be divided into groups. Firstly there are the shipwrecked marriages. These disasters are usually due to one of the following causes; either gross inequality of age, or a wide divergence of temperament. In the case of the relationships outside marriage, most of these are really potential marriages and not 'affairs' in the generally accepted sense. It is society which renders the marriage impossible and eventually causes the bonds to be severed, either by renunciation or through suicide; for the lovers are usually of contrasting social classes, the man from the aristocracy and the woman from the working-class or the petite bourgeoisie. Were she from the wealthy industrial upper-middle class, all would be well, since there was a growing rapprochement between these two groups; the one possessed what the other lacked. The aristocracy possessed rank and titles but often lacked money; with the new upper-middle class the reverse was the case. But women from the 'lower classes' could offer no form of 'social compensation' and, however worthy the character of the person concerned, she was 'unacceptable'.

In both groups, the resulting disaster is
due essentially to an offence committed against the principle of order, either the order represented by contemporary society or that imposed by nature herself. In a few instances the characters themselves recognise in time the primary source of conflict, acknowledge their inability to meet the challenge, and submit. These rescue their lives and social integrity at the cost of great personal sacrifice. In the majority of cases, on the other hand, this realisation comes too late to save them, and they perish or spend the rest of their lives in misery.

An interesting exception to the general rule is represented in the earliest novel (Vor dem Sturm) by Marie Anichase, a girl of humble, even obscure origin, who marries Levin von Vitzewitz and receives the general approval of society. This phenomenon is not repeated in the later novels and is really an exception in name only, since from earliest childhood, Marie has been adopted as much by the noble Vitzewitz family as by her nominal guardian, Schulze Anichase. She was the school-friend of Renate, Levin's sister, and is now her confidante and constant companion, living amongst the aristocratic family on terms of perfect equality.
In Grete minde, the marriage of Grete and Valtin is prevented by the hard-hearted lack of sympathy on the part of elders, and the result is a liaison which ends in utter disaster - the death of Valtin through an illness resulting from his hard life with the strolling players, also that of Grete and her child, together with the destruction of the whole town of Tangermünde, which she sets ablaze in her crazed despair at ever obtaining justice there.

The problem is varied somewhat in the other balladesque novel, Elternklipp, since the possibility of marriage or an intrigue is precluded by the complication of jealousy on the part of the boy's father, Baltzer Bocholt, and the resultant murder of Martin. The marriage which does follow, between Hilde and Bocholt, is one of silent anguish, for their ages and respective temperaments are grossly unequal. Moreover the aura of bloodshed hangs over this ill-starred match. The old laws triumph again, and Baltzer dies by his own hand, while Hilde, after a brief respite which she devotes to a life of good works, ends her days in early death.

Schach's marriage is one of form only. Whether
he really loves Victoire or prefers her mother, Frau von Carayon, or whether he is in fact in love with neither of them, remain debatable points. The text leaves the matter in a certain degree of obscurity. The moment of emotional intoxication which makes the union a necessity is unconvincing and quite unrelated to anything that has gone before. It is at least certain that, had the marriage not been abruptly terminated by Schach's suicide immediately after the wedding ceremony, it could never have been a success. For one thing, the ages were too unequal; Schach was a contemporary of Frau von Carayon, not of her daughter. Then Victoire's disfigurement would have been too much for his refined aesthetic susceptibilities and would have made him acutely aware of his rôle as a target for malicious social gossip, which he was completely unable to face in any form. Nor did the couple have sufficient in common to reach a spiritual union. A further factor was Schach's temperamental unsuitability for marriage at all. This is clearly recognised by Victoire, who writes to her friend: "Er gehörte durchaus... zu den Männern, die nicht für die Ehe geschaffen sind... Ein Kardinal..."
The tragedy of Graf Petöly is a tragedy of youth married to age. Complicating factors are Franziska's misinterpretation of her own temperament, the untimely arrival on the scene of a young and attractive rival, and the loneliness of her life in the mournful castle at Arpa. But the age-factor is the most important by far. "Er ist alt, und du bist jung", warns Hannan before the marriage (2). Moreover the Count was not in love with Franziska, nor she with him. He wanted her amusing conversation, the ornament of her beauty and the companionship of her interest in the theatre. She, on the other hand, wanted a home, comfort, security, and the dignity of a title. Thus it is a 'Scheinheirat' from both points of view. The episode of the ring warns the elderly count of the trend of events, he sees his mistake, which he realises it is now too late to amend, and takes his own life. Despite his self-sacrifice, the young people do not find happiness together.

The remarkable feature of the Adulteria story is that one of the partners, Melanie, has the strength to survive the social opprobrium following
her desertion of Van der Straaten, and to begin a new life with Rubehn. There is even a limited degree of reconciliation with society as a result of her courage in adversity. At this stage of Fontane's art there is still room for the partial exception to the rule, for the modification of the inevitable, for the calling into question of the iron laws governing life; later these possibilities are ruled out and the victory of society is complete, distasteful though it may be both to the reader and (privately) to Fontane himself.

Melanie, a young woman of sensitivity and good taste is joined to a middle-aged man of parvenu values and consummate tactlessness - kindly and humorous, it is true, but lacking in exactly those qualities which would appeal to a woman of Melanie's type. On the surface the marriage appears to be a success, mainly owing to a mutual tolerance of differences, but it is a 'Scheinehe' nonetheless, and the advent of Rubehn breaks it to pieces. Had not this kindred spirit come into Melanie's life, it is probable that the marriage would have continued on the same even plane, neither happy nor unhappy, but the moment that love calls in another direction, such a marriage has
nothing to keep it together. For Melanie to have deserted her husband for frivolous reasons is quite unthinkable; her serious and loyal character is amply demonstrated during the bitter times which she has to face with Rubehn before winning through to quiet domestic contentment.

There is again a difference of age in Cécile, also one of social origin; but neither of these factors plays such an important part in the bringing about of the tragedy as does the difference of temperament between the two partners. St. Arnaud, "der Mann der Determiniertheiten" (1) and one of Fontane's few energetic and ruthless male characters, has little understanding for his hypersensitive, languishing, introspective young wife, with her craving for worship, devotion and compliments. In such circumstances it is natural that she should accept gratefully from an admirer, von Gordon, that consideration which she fails to receive from her husband. Nor is there much danger, thanks to her unhappy past, of her becoming compromised with Gordon, though she is undoubtedly very fond of him. But he is unable to imitate her cool detachment; his attraction is consid-
erably less platonic, and the mystery around Cécile's past adds curiosity to his ardour. Then, in a frenzy of jealous rage over an incident that was really without significance, he creates a scene in public, is challenged to a duel by St. Arnaud (who feels chiefly that his 'honour' is involved), and is killed, just as was earlier on the army officer in St. Arnaud's regiment who had objected to the marriage on the grounds of Cécile's past. Cécile herself, realising that she has unwittingly been the causes of another man's death, and appreciating to the full the emptiness of her married life, takes poison. Her past has proved itself inescapable, her influence eternally fatal.

Between Christine and Holk (Unwiederbringlich) there is no apparent difference of age or background, but a considerable one of temperament. Holk is partly the quiet, home-loving type of man and partly the temperamentental, impressionable society adventurer. His wife is wholly home-loving and of a peculiarly pious and coldly unsympathetic disposition, despite her fine principles and good heart. Her incredibly doleful and tactless approach to her husband only serves to aggravate the existing conflict in his
nature, and a separation is brought about which need never have occurred.

Social difference alone is the factor leading to the Stine tragedy. Through this one cause, Waldemar is driven to suicide and Stine herself into an illness which suggests a fatal decline. These two sensitive, high-minded lovers, whose conduct is impeccable, find the whole weight of society's condemnation upon their sincere love and contemplated marriage. In ironical contrast, the purely expedient illicit relationship between Pauline Pittelkow, Stine's more worldly elder sister, and the old roué Graf Haldern, Waldemar's uncle, is tolerated by society so long as it remains discreetly hidden! It does not conflict with the prevailing views on social order, whereas an honourable marriage between Stine, the penniless seamstress, and Waldemar, the aristocratic ex-officer, would!

If Botho (Irrungen, Irrungen) does not have the strength to defy society - or possibly possesses sufficient insight to recognise the futility of such a course in prevailing circumstances - he has at least the courage, which Waldemar lacked, to submit to its claims. By facing up to social requirements in advance, he and
Lene are able to enjoy a few precious months of each other's company and at the same time avoid the catastrophic ending which overtook Stine and Waldemar. When the break has to come, Lene is prepared:

"Ich hab' es so kommen sehen, von Anfang an, und es geschieht nur, was muss." (1)

So, quietly and without pathos, the renunciation is made and the social gods are placated. This gesture comes about not only as a result of outward force, but also from an inner sense of the necessity for social order. Pondering on this problem whilst out riding, Botho comes to the following conclusion:

"Ordnung ist viel und mitunter alles"; (2) Asking himself whether his present way of life is contributing to this universal order, he is forced to reply: "Nein: Ordnung ist Ehe" (3). Lene, too, is conscious of the same obligation, despite the very real quality of her love - the most sincere and moving instance of its kind in Fontane's novels. Frau Dörr says of her: "Sie ist für Ordnung und fürs Reelle" (4). Thus both marry in their own spheres, leaving their thoughts and love with each other. So two more 'Scheinehen' are created!
Strangely enough, Botho and Kathe are not exactly unhappy together in their married life, thanks to tolerance and compromise. But it remains a 'Scheinene' just the same, and we feel that if Lene, for some unknown reason, were to come once again into Botho's life, the marriage would instantly be shattered.

The lack of 'Seelengemeinschaft' between Effi and Instetten (Effi Briest) is illustrated in some detail by the author; the warm, loving, girlish temperament of Effi on the one hand and the cool, reflective, pedagogic Instetten on the other. The age-difference, too, is particularly pronounced; seventeen and rising fifty are united in this extraordinary marriage. Even this obstacle might have been surmounted, but Instetten's attitude prepares the way for certain disaster, since there is a weak strain in Effi's character and a lack of aggressiveness which makes it very difficult for her to fight it. her 'Hang nach dem Aparaten' becomes stronger than her 'Ordnungssinn'. In explaining these characteristics, the author is not seeking to defend her, but merely to show how and why the trouble came about.

For Crapahs there is no quality of feeling;
he is lacking in 'Ordnung'. "Muss denn alles so furchtbar gesetzlich sein? Alle Gesetzlichkeiten sind langweilig", he says to Effi quite early in their acquaintanceship (1). Effi does not love Crampas, but finds in him something of a kindred temperament — a complete contrast to the well-meaning but excessively cold Instetten who, but for this defect, has the makings of a noble character.

In this case, the revenge of society is a fearful one. Social law demands that Instetten's honour be vindicated, despite the 'Verjährungstheorie' advanced by Wallersdorf (2). Crampas has to die, Effi has to die (after several years of suffering and illness), and Instetten has to renounce all hopes of earthly happiness.

The number of characters in these novels who expiate their guilt (or even their failure) by death is remarkably large. Von Gordon and Crampas die in a duel, Baltzer Bocholt, Schach, Petofi and Waldemer commit suicide, as do three women characters — Grete Linde, Cécile and Christine Holk, while five other persons die in circumstances representing a form of 'poetic justice' or resulting directly from
their own conduct, namely Tubal, Hradschek, Stine, Lennert Menz and Effi Briest. This appalling death-roll omits those other main characters who die simply through illness or old age, e.g. Hugo Grossmann, Dubslav von Stechlin and General von Poggenpuhl. This harvest of death and sorrow represents in many cases the 'natürliche Konsequenzen' in which Fontane believed.

Despite Fontane's own reasonably happy married life, there is an almost complete absence in these novels of a counterbalancing picture of normal, stable marriages, at any rate amongst the principal younger characters. Another surprising feature is the number of widowed persons amongst those older and more stable characters where one might have expected just such a picture as that mentioned above; e.g. Berndt von Vitzewitz, Dubslav von Stechlin, Frau von Carayon. The nearest approach to a stable marriage is probably the short-lived match in Mathilde Möhring, but this is between two very practical characters whose problems are largely those of everyday life, not social or psychological ones.

The following conclusions would seem to
suggest themselves from the study of the author's approach to these problems — conclusions which are principally valid, of course, for the period in question.

1. A union without trust, understanding and true love is a mésalliance, even though it fulfils society's requirements.

2. An offence against morality, such as an 'affair of convenience', is less serious than an offence against society (e.g. a lasting irregular union or a marriage which is a social mésalliance.) (1)

3. Married people should be similar in outlook, ideals and temperament, i.e. the same and not contrasting types. They should reflect, not complement each other. (2)

4. Moral values are not absolute, but vary with each age and in each class of society.

5. Open opposition to the social law by any but the most aggressive and independent will lead to disaster.

6. Conformity may involve great personal sacrifice, sometimes even the complete renunciation of happiness and the leading of an empty existence.

7. Suicide as a solution is a badge of
weakness and 'Lebensunfähigkeit'. As a gesture of
defiance it is futile and senseless.

8. The duel is a piece of criminal folly,
and the type of 'honour' which can be 'satisfied' or
'vindicated' in this manner is a hollow sham.

9. In the marriages Fontane's novels
have depicted the menfolk are usually weaker char-
acters than the women and altogether less decisive.

10. Fontane neither blames nor exonerates
his guilty characters, nor does he encourage moral
laxity any more than narrow, moralising self-
righteousness. (1)

A passage from one of Th. Fontane's letters
to his son Theo (2) will furnish a final verdict:

"Das Richtige ist: Verbleib innerhalb der
eigenen Sphäre, dieselbe Nationalität, dieselbe Religion,
dieselbe Lebensstellung. Nur aus dieser Gleichheit
ergibt sich auch die Gleichheit der Anschauungen, die
Übereinstimmung in den entscheidenden Dingen, ohne die
kein rechtes Glück und keine rechte Freude möglich ist."

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CHAPTER SEVEN.

Fontane's Personal Values.

A reader who approached Fontane's works in the hope of finding there a clearly-tabulated personal philosophy would be grievously disappointed. He was averse to anything 'programmatic' in literature as well as being extremely reserved by nature and reluctant to divulge in direct form his most personal feelings and beliefs.

"Mut und Schmerz frisst er in sich hinein. Er meidet alles überflüssige Pathos und ist kein Schönredner. So ist in ihm ein seltsames Gemisch von Gesprächigkeit und Offenheit mit ... herber Verschlossenheit", writes M. E. Gilbert (1).

His family letters, of course, give the clearest indication of his values (though we have before drawn attention to the need for caution in accepting all of these extempore pronouncements at their face value!) and even there it is only under the stress of very strong emotion that he is really explicit about his deeper feelings.

In the works themselves there is much of his personal 'Weltanschauung' to be found, and that
in its most mature and reflected form, but it must be culled patiently, little by little; it is seldom stated openly and with dogmatic simplicity, but exists usually as a 'Grundton' (1).

Lack of dogmatism and formality is, then, the first quality we must record as being typical of Fontane's nature (as also of his literary technique.) This fact was recognised by the novelist himself, and he wrote ironically in the poem Was mir Fehlte:

"Suche nicht weiter; man bringt es nicht weit
Bei fehlendem Sinne für Feierlichkeit."

Or again, in his family correspondence:

"Alles Ehrpussliche, alle Pomposität...
reizt mich zu kritischen Betrachtungen" (2).

His objectivity and detachment. He was capable of moods of astonishing objectivity, though he does not always write in this vein. In a letter to Georg Friedländer in 1886, he says he views life "wie ein Theaterstück" and follows every scene of social activity with a detached, artistic interest - "wie von meinem Parkettplatz 23 aus" (3). Even the smallest matters have their significance for him. Nor is he inclined towards mockery or arrogant criticism - "nur
Betrachtung, Prüfung, Abwägung." (1) Three years earlier he had written to his wife: "Das Beobachten und Schlussziehen ist, wie Du weißt, meine Wonne" (2).

In his novels, therefore, his judgment (on those occasions when he allows himself this privilege) is always tentative, mild and understanding — except, of course, in cases where hypocrisy is involved, particularly amongst the bourgeoisie. In a letter to his father from England as early as 1856, he adds as an explanation of his long postscript: "Wie das mir immer geht, wenn ich ein Urteil ausgesprochen habe, so auch diesmal — kaum steht es da, so fang' ich an, die Richtigkeit zu bezweifeln" (3). His open-mindedness and his consciousness of the relativity of all values lead to a reluctance to judge his fellow-men with anything but the greatest tolerance. For both good and evil, justice and injustice are a part of life — and therefore a part of every man, and whether we like it or not, we must, according to Fontane, accept the presence of both as a fact.

As Pfänger has stated (4), Fontane himself had to go through great inner struggles in order to attain this viewpoint; it was an artistic ideal of objectivity towards which he strove rather than a
natural inner harmony which he had always possessed. As the letters to his family will show, he was not as able to carry over this artistic detachment into his personal life as many of his contemporaries imagined prior to the publication of his correspondence.

One of the results of this objectivity is a disinclination in his works to give way to any form of moral indignation; rather does he attempt to understand and to forgive. Only the self-righteous and smugly-virtuous receive his outright condemnation. Dresch has summed up his attitude in these words:

"Plein d'indulgence pour nos faiblesses quand elles sont la marque de notre nature humaine, ... il n'a pas assez de sévérité pour nos préjugés, notre fausse vertu, notre gloriole, pour tout ce qui fait la dureté du coeur." (1)

In the author's view, the erring characters of his novels are often merely the victims of circumstances, held as they are in the iron grip of destiny, rather like the central figures of some of his earlier ballads.

For although the world (as objectively viewed by Fontane) is not hopelessly evil, it neverth-
less does preclude that idea of total happiness usually sought after by mankind. ("Wer ist glücklich? Kennst du wen?" asks Wilibald Schmidt in *Frau Jenny Treibal* [1].) Virtue, too, is a quality largely dependent upon a kindly fate. One must not expect too much from this earthly life, though the ideals of men are not to be scorned since they may be realisable in another and better life. And the power to dream of these ideals and their realisation is one of life's greatest joys (2). Thus against a background of quiet pessimism, a trace of optimism is to be found, albeit a somewhat resigned and melancholy one. But the pessimism is predominant: not the violent and black despair of Strindberg, but the gentle resignation of Thomas Hardy.

Resolution. Ernst Bertram speaks of Fontane's progress towards "einem verstehenden, lächelnden, ein wenig — spöttischen und ein wenig müden Enttäuschtsein"; (3). This 'Enttäuschtsein' finds its expression in the deep undertones of resignation found in so many of his works.

"In der Bresche stehen und aushalten, bis man selber fällt; das ist das beste", says Instetten towards the close of *Heili Ereist*. Fontane himself speaks of his "freundlich wehmutige, halb humoristisch
gefarbte Resignation" in a letter to his wife written in 1885 (1). Or again, even more explicitly:

"Resignieren können ist ein Glück und beinahe eine Tugend." (2).

So all that remains is to 'hold out', like Instetten, - "Mit Blechmusik immer weiter und immer heiter vorwärts.... nur keine Sentimentalitäten!" (3).

As an escape from the sufferings of pessimism there is always 'Entsagung', a quiet renunciation of the excessive demands of impetuous youth and an attitude of mind which Shears has called Fontane's "mild optimism of resignation" (4). One must be satisfied with the little pleasures of life; one must, like Fontane, be "fürs Kleine" (5).

"Es gibt nur ein Mittel sich wohl zu fühlen: man muss lernen, mit dem Gegebenen zufrieden zu sein" (6).

Fatalism. The idea of a governing fate comes out very strongly in most of Fontane's novels. It appears in the motif of 'Ahnenfluch' as early as Vor dem Sturm; in Ellernklipp we are told of Hilde that 'ihr Blut ist ihr Los' and hear the gloomy predictions of Melcher Herm: "Es geschicht, was muss.... Eig und unwandelbar ist das Gesetz" (7). There is a pronounced Fatalism in
L'Adultera; Van der Straaten is the chief representative of this outlook, with his belief: "Es kommt, was kommen soll" (1), his choice of the symbolic picture by Tintoretto, and his resigned attitude towards the loss of Melanie ("Es musste so kommen"). Cécile is a victim of the destiny embodied in blind social prejudices and the ineffaceable power of past errors. There is an atmosphere of inevitability surrounding the misfortunes of Effi Briest, while old Dubslav (Der Stechlin) is openly fatalistic in his views of approaching death: "Das 'Ich' ist nichts - ein ewig Gesetzliches vollzieht sich, weiter nichts, und dieser Vollzug, auch wenn er 'Tod' heisst, darf uns nicht schrecken." (2)

Fate also plays a less direct, but equally important rôle in the other works. Social convention is shown throughout as one of its chief instruments. Law, tradition and class-prejudices all prescribe to some extent the conduct of the individual. Fontane inwardly deplores this victory of blind forces over reason and will-power but, realist that he is, he does not attempt to disguise its existence. There is no 'deus ex machina' to rescue his novel-characters from the relentless grip of the...
Iron laws; with hardly an exception, those who resist are broken.

It is this conception of humanity being in the grip of forces outside its control and having only a limited degree of free will that allows the author, despite his artistic detachment, to view the weaknesses of his heroes and heroines with tolerance and forgiveness. It is an interesting duality - a writer who coldly accepts the hard laws of fate and allows his characters to become enmeshed in, and eventually destroyed by them, and yet who often has a deep and sincere affection for those whom his imagination has created!

Nor does his fatalism imply a lack of personal responsibility on the part of the individual. Within the limits permitted to the free will, it is man's duty to exercise that will. Also, if fate cannot be altered, at least some of its effects can be softened by a little kindness and pity on the part of others.

The individual who submits bravely and uncompromisingly to a destiny which he is powerless to resist earns Fontane's admiration (e.g. Mathilde Möhring,
Van der Straaten, Lene and Botho, Dubslav von Stechlin."

Such bravery or 'stilles Heldentum', as he calls it, is greater in his estimation than the heroism displayed in the heat of battle.

Resistance against an unalterable natural or even social law brings about its own punishment in the form of "natürliche Konsequenzen, die mitunter sehr hart sind" (1); but these consequences have nothing to do with a moral law as such. They may, in fact, be totally unjust, but they occur just the same. (E.g. the fate of Hilde in Ellernklipp, of Waldemar in Stine, of Graf Petofy.) None of his chief characters are 'heroes' in the conventional sense, but many of them suffer heroically.

Fontane's own solution to the problem of life and destiny was to expect practically nothing from life; then, at any rate, disappointment would be precluded and usually one was likely to receive a little more than one had looked for. When sorrows do come, they must be accepted as a passing phase; in this connection he liked to quote a saying of Louis Schneider's with reference to life's 'theatre' - "Um neun Uhr ist alles aus." "Bämse nicht auf", he says in one of his poems (Überlass es der Zeit) for, no matter how dreadful
a thing may seem today, it will pass with time; "Alles ist wichtig nur auf Stunden" (1). It is all a question of acquiring the correct attitude towards life; that ironical, tolerant "heiteres Darüberstehen", which at times even borders on the realms of optimism.

This ironical attitude has nothing of searing bitterness in it; it contains all the elements of kindly good-humour and he could apply it to himself as well as to others, as his published correspondence has shown. Not that he ever really managed to conquer his private sense of bitterness; the letters to his family are full of self-pity and outbursts of resentment against life. But as an artist he reached a state of inner harmony which as a man he did not. So we must agree with Ernst Heilborn when he speaks of Fontane's "Milde, hinter der beträchtlicher Zorn wetterleuchtet" (2).

His religious views. Fontane's quiet resignation has something of the flavour of Calvinism about it, and it leads to the question of his religious views. Although clergy and churches play a significant part in his works, it seems clear that he was, in the words of Maync; "keine religiöse, geschweige denn kirchliche Natur" (3). His own religious background was that of Protestant
Calvinism, but he was tolerant of all sects, including Catholicism, towards which several of his novel-characters are attracted and one of whose priests, Pater Fessler, appears in Graf Petöfy. We remember also Cécile's re-conversion to her old faith just before dying, the strong leanings towards Catholicism manifested by Franziska after the death of Count Petöfy, and by Victoire in her letters from Italy at the close of Schach von Wuthenow.

The bulk of his characters, both clerical and lay, belong to the Lutheran church, but there is no narrow dogmatism about their beliefs. Like Fontane himself, they represent a "Weltfrömmigkeit" (1) rather than a sectarian creed. 'Christian conduct' rather than theology is the hallmark of the author's personal religion.

Regarding his views on immortality, we have little to help us in the texts, but a letter of Loy1 is communicative on this point. It is once again to Mete, who shared so many of his intellectual problems: speaking of "die Nichtigkeit alles Irdischen", he adds;

"Wer an ein Dinges glaubt, dem wird in diesem Zustande erst recht wohl, aber zu den so beglück-
The only time of his life during which religion (as distinct from Christian ethics) seems to have strongly coloured his thoughts was during his captivity in the Franco-Prussian War. His letters during this period contain frequent references to God, and it seems that the possible imminence of sudden death caused him, as so many others, to turn his serious attention upon religious problems. The death of his son George in 1887 seems to have caused a severe reaction into scepticism and bitterness, and during this period some of his most pessimistic commentaries on humanity appear in the letters. Just prior to this tragic event, in January of the same year, we can observe the persistence of his religious strivings, unconvinced though he still remains. He says to Mete in this letter:

"Sicher hat man's nie, und um die Gnade der grossen Rätselmacht, sie heisse nun Gott oder Schicksal, muss immer gebeten werden. Wir sollen... jedem neuen glücklichen Tag neuen Dank entgegenbringen" (2).

The nearest approach Fontane ever made to a formal declaration of faith was in a passage of one letter (again to Mete) written in 1893 at the age of 74 in which he discusses the Sermon on the Mount.
"All den grossen Sätzen in der Bergpredigt haftet zwar was Philistroses an, aber wenn ihre Weisheit richtig geübt wird, d.h. nicht in Feigheit, sondern in stillem Mut, so sind sie doch das einzig Wahre, und die ganze Größe des Christentums steckt in jenen paar Ausspruchen" (1).

If one were to choose a single verse from this Sermon with which to characterise Fontane's religious sentiments, it would be: "Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain mercy". For surely no chronicler of social life, imbued with the zeal to cleanse society of its insincerities and its "schändliches Komödienspiel" (2) could have been more mercifully disposed towards the weaknesses and errings of his little people; he painted all their faults but he loved them still. Even in the sentimental hypocrites and the villains he found something to relieve the gloom, as witness his treatment of the Treibels & Hla-
scheks.

If we accept Fr. Schönesmann's verdict that Fontane's literary mission was "die ewige Fende des Echten gegen das Unechte" (3) and that his rôle as a social novelist was to help humanity to realise its own faults, then we should perhaps add that he pursued this aim with kindly understanding and sympathy. "Und vielleicht war Verständnis nicht nur das Beste, was man (den Menschen) bringen konnte, sondern auch das, was ihnen selbst am dringendsten nötig," (4)

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CHAPTER EIGHT.

Fontane, the Novelist, in Comparison with other Authors.

Little more than the briefest indications can be included here upon this vast and interesting field, but two points in particular would seem to demand special attention. In the first place; what was Fontane's attitude towards the Naturalist Movement and the social picture presented by its members? Secondly, what gains, if any, did he receive from the heritage of Romanticism?

1. Fontane and the Naturalists: Similarities and Differences in their Interpretation of Society.

It was the publication of L'Adultera which first caused Fontane to be hailed by the Naturalists as their leader, a fact not only remarkable inasmuch as an elderly, well-established writer of 70 suddenly found himself at the head of a band of young literary revolutionaries, but also for the misinterpretation of Fontane's art that it represented.

It is true that Fontane welcomed with enthusiasm the new drastic realism, especially in the social novel, but he also added certain important reservations.
The new movement was, he felt, performing a great service for literature, since it was ridding it of the "Doublettenkrankheit" (1) from which it had so long suffered, and of that sickly reproduction of themes and styles which were out of touch with reality in the new social era. On the other hand, it was only a beginning and not an end in itself:

"Will dieser erste Schritt auch schon das Ziel sein..., so hort alle Kunst auf und der Polizeibericht wird der Weisheit letzter Schluss" (2).

It was, in his opinion, an extreme manifestation, necessary in order to shake writers out of the prevailing complacency, but not a heritage for posterity. Whilst he admired men like Gerhart Hauptmann, whom he helped to fame, ("Ich bin auch sehr von ihm eingenommen" (3), he once told Stephany), he did not want the coming generations to be blessed "mit lauter... Schnapstragödien" (4). Not that the Naturalists' work in the field of social description was without intrinsic merit in his view. Even Vor Sonnenaufgang, with all its crudities, excited his lively interest and led him to write to Mete concerning its author: "Er ist ein völlig entphraster Ibsen" - Ibsen
as he ideally should have been (1). It is the one-sided view of life that they present which he deplores, their exclusive preoccupation with the lowest levels of society and the basest forms of human conduct. Life is not entirely a matter of ugliness, objected Fontane, and though the Naturalists were right in facing up to those aspects, they failed to make use of 'Verklärung', that judicious blending of poetic realism and artistic beauty which alone would render them acceptable in literature. "Ohne diese Verklärung gibt es aber keine eigentliche Kunst" (2). Real art should contain both beauty and harsh reality, good and evil, all in their proper proportions (3).

The general tolerance which he displayed, as an elderly writer towards a new movement, is a tribute to his own mental youthfulness and receptivity to fresh ideas. He agreed wholeheartedly with the Naturalists on a number of points; the social novel, for instance, should be able to cover the new fields of science and technology, to enquire into the social problems of the poorer classes and the vices of great cities, whereas hitherto it had tended to escape into a world of make-believe. Thus (for the time being, at any rate) the
originality of the new school was almost as valuable as if its members had created works of great beauty. For Fontane was not only a great author, but also a great pioneer in literature and, like the younger generation, he missed the true reflection of the everyday world in the pallid imitations of classicism which had been in favour for so long, above all in the dialogue contained in these works. One of the Naturalists' chief services, said Fontane, was their introduction of realism into the speech of their characters.

Against all this, there is a formidable list of objections which Fontane raised. The Naturalists broke conventions for the sake of breaking them, and their characters do likewise; Fontane disagreed with this and his people only flout social laws when there is a definite reason for doing so, or as a result of certain natural laws. The Naturalists were inclined to cultivate a 'reporting' or 'photographic' style of dialogue, whereas that of Fontane is a blend of realism and art. His love of careful portrayal of reality does not extend to the extreme exactitude of the Naturalists and he always leaves room for an imaginative and spiritual content in his
works. His dialogue is alive and real compared with
the 'phonographic reproductions' (1) of people like
holz &. Schlaf or even Sudermann. Whilst facing up to
the hitherto 'banned' topics (e.g. in Stine and Irrungen,
Wirrungen) he does not dwell exclusively on the problem-
atical side of life - "er verbannt darum nicht das
goldene Tageslicht aus der Poesie" (2). Naturalism has
a downward trend and the victory of matter over mind,
instinct over spirit is inevitable; Fontane recognised
life's destructive tendencies but, setting them against
the more positive aspects, he conquered his pessimism
over life's ugliness by means of the saving grace of
humour. "Der beste Weg ist der des Humors", he writes (3),
and he cannot understand why the new school failed to
make use of the same escape-route. His horizons were
larger, too; he was deeply interested in the social
and cultural life of the upper classes, which would
have been impossible had he been a Naturalist. Nor
did he share the tendencious nature of their art which
sought with gloomy determination in one direction only.
Nor Fontane, any 'Kodifizierung der Kunst' would have
been quite impossible, for his approach to art was
empirical rather than doctrinaire.

We may say then, that despite certain
obvious points of contact, there were more factors dividing Fontane's art from that of the Naturalists than joining them. Whilst the younger generation sought 'Wirklichkeit' in their presentation of society, Fontane sought 'Wahrheit' (1). He was, as Maync calls him; "ein Dichter, der die Wahrheit mit Künstleraugen anschaut" (2).

Fontane as a novelist was a mediator between two hostile epochs and, without prejudicing his individual art, was able to adapt for his own purposes the most valuable elements in both (3). Rather like Wagner's Hans Sachs, he was never fundamentally opposed to changes, and he regarded the 'Neutöner' of literature (4) with tolerant understanding.

2. Fontane and the Romantic heritage.

For Fontane there were two forms of Romanticism (5). 'Altromantik', in Fontane's sense, was something eternal, a spirit of beauty distilled from the poet's imagination, while 'Neuromantik' was a passing phase - unstable, neurotic, egoistic and tending towards the fantastic and bizarre. He claimed no affinity with any 'school' of Romanticism, but believed in the eternal force of 'die romantik an sich',


though on rare occasions certain late-romantic traits do creep into his novels, (e.g. the figure of Hoppenmariken and the spirit of the mysterious Chinaman who terrifies the imagination of Effi Briest).

This 'ewige romantik' may be interpreted in his writings as the sense of beauty which transforms the everyday reality of his subjects into artistic form, ..."und webt um die gemeine Deutlichkeit der Dinge den goldenen Duft der Morgenröte" (1). Further specific instances of his Romanticism are the occasional use of symbolism, of 'Stimmung', and of balladesque 'Andeutung' in the place of description.

There are symbolic 'Leitmotiv' in one or two of the novels which are slightly reminiscent of the 'blues-blues'-theme of the Romantics. In Fontane's case they usually foreshadow the outcome of the story, especially its utter inevitability. There are, for instance, the toy ships in Hellernklipp, the fiery sunset glow in erte Kinde (when the child has the weird feeling that the church is ablaze), Christine's dream in Unniederbringlich of a funeral procession which became a wedding and then a funeral once again, and the early introduction of the Tintoretto picture, L'Adultera, in the novel of that name. Then there is...
also in Effi Briest the use, in two contrasting sets of circumstances, of the phrase "Effi, komm!" in the symbolical sense of 'Come back to the world of childhood safety', and (in the same novel) the motifs of the mysterious Chinaman and the 'Schloon'.

Sometimes his characters, too, have a hint of symbolism; though distinct individuals and no mere 'types', they have a wider, symbolical significance. In a letter to Moritz Lazarus in 1891, Fontane wrote: "Ich persönlich bin sehr für Gestalten in der Kunst, die nicht bloss Typ und nicht bloss Individuum sind" (1). On the whole, these touches of Romantic symbolism in Fontane's novels are disturbing and clash with his general tone of realism. Such examples are the stress laid on the Adultera picture, and the constant references made to the apparition of the Chinaman in Effi Briest. Occasionally they are unobtrusive and effective; e.g. the sunset motif in Grete Minde.

On the other hand, mysticism is extremely rare and Romantic irony is absent altogether. The technique of "building up in order to knock down again" (2), or the bitter mockery of Heine were repulsive to him. His own irony had much less of satire and much
more of genuine humour in it.

In Grete Minde and Ellernklipp especially, and to a lesser degree in other novels, there is something which suggests 'Altromantik', but it is a discreet flavouring rather than an essential ingredient. Nor does it clash with the spirit of the work as a whole; realism and romanticism are conciliated and skilfully harmonised. "Es ist (says Peters)...wie das Mitklingen einer leisen Violine" (1).

3. Fontane and the Novels of Scott.

An indication has already been given in another chapter of the early introduction Fontane received to the works of Sir Walter Scott through his father, who was a Scott-enthusiast, and this love of the British author continued throughout his lifetime. In his family letters, we find the praises of "der grosse Waverley-Dichter" (2) being sung again and again; more than 40 years after the original childhood enthusiasm, Fontane is still reading the Scottish master "mit ungeschwächter Erbauung" (3), and is moved in his mature years to exclaim: "Hoch, Scott; ihr andern seid doch alle nur Nachtwächter!" (4). He is still charmed by his
"Leichtigkeit und Liebenswürdigkeit.... Grazie und Humor" (1) - qualities which he so often finds missing in his own German contemporaries. Critical and cool though Fontane was in matters of art, he finds himself on one occasion impelled to spring from his seat and stride across the room in excited admiration for the author's powers of characterisation and dialogue (2). Faults of detail did not escape notice, of course. "Nicht allzu sorglich in der Ausführung, nicht allzu tief in der psychologischen Behandlung", he once noted in a letter (3). Yet he is still to Fontane "ein reicher, göttbegnadeter Mann" (4) whose work is everywhere "einfach, natürlich, humoristisch und voll so entzückender Oasen, dass man die zwischenliegenden Steppen gern mit in den Kauf nimmt" (5).

As well as sharing Scott's historical enthusiasm, Fontane was deeply interested in the social aspects of the Scottish writer's novels and, in his own works, has brought out and developed this element, so that it remains persistently to the fore - more so indeed than in Scott himself.

L.A. Shears, who claims that there is a very wide degree of similarity between the two authors, admits that any influence which Scott exerted
on Fontane was limited to the content of the novels, not the form (1). Certain scenes and characters in Fontane are certainly rather reminiscent of Walter Scott, e.g. Seidentopf (Vor dem Sturm) and Oldbuck (The Antiquary), Grete Minde's revenge and that of Ulrica in Ivanhoe, the bell-symbolism in Graf Petöfı and that of Rob Roy. Shears' further attempts to find close parallels between, say, Effi Briest and Effie Deans, are of a more problematical and debatable nature, but the simpler examples are sufficiently convincing for us to assume that Fontane's voracious reading of Scott had left its mark on the German author's own artistic imagination and powers of social interpretation. Though the working method of the two men was very different - Scott writing easily and profusely, Fontane scrutinising, revising and perfecting - the general picture of the finished products shows a certain, though limited, kinship of personality and interests. There is the same love of the homeland, the same historical and antiquarian interests, fondness of anecdotes, sense of realism, power of observation, tolerance of outlook, sympathetic treatment of characters of humble origin, absence of lyricism and underlying tone of quiet humour (2).
It is not often that an author pays a conscious tribute to the memory of another in a novel. This Fontane does in *Unwiderbringlich*, when Holk says to his servant: "Nimm ein paar Bände Walter Scott mit; man kann nicht wissen, und der passt immer" (1).

4. Other Influences and Points of Contact.  
Goethe. Amongst 19th century authors, Fontane seems to have been one of the few who were not deeply influenced by the heritage of Goethe. Though he read much of Goethe's work with interest (especially the more youthful products), he was highly critical of the prevailing Goethe-worship. "Wir stehen in einem Goethebann und müssen draus heraus", he wrote (2).

Dresch nevertheless finds that Fontane has certain characteristics in common with Goethe, as, for example, his powers of psychological penetration, his ability to create living characters, and his consideration for small details. Against this he records the wide difference in 'Weltanschauung' between the two men and Fontane's lack of Goethe's vast experience and his profundity as a writer.

Kleist. Michael Kohlhaas and *Der Prinz von Homburk*, with their realistic, penetrating observation, represent
(according to Schönemann) the beginning of 'künstlerisches Markertum', and the coolness of attitude and sobriety of form and style are occasionally reminiscent of Fontane's own artistic detachment. A special point of contact between the two authors is in the portraiture of the 'likable villain' in Der Zerbrochene Kran and Unter dem Birnbaum respectively.

Thackeray and Dickens. Turning for a moment to English literature, it must be noted that, apart from Scott, Fontane was probably influenced also to a lesser degree by Thackeray and Dickens. The former did, in some ways, the same for the society of London as Fontane did for that of Berlin and the Mark, and there is a certain similarity in their powers of characterisation, although Fontane's social criticism lacks that bitter ridicule and snobbery which is to be found in the English author. Fontane refers enthusiastically to Thackeray's Vanity Fair when writing to his wife from London in 1852 (1).

Dickens illuminated a different side of London society, delving deeper into the life of the proletariat than Fontane ever attempted to do. His humour and ability to render otherwise unpalatable
and ugly subject-matter "grotesk-interessant" (1) attracted Fontane, and his mastery of detail found a sympathetic appreciation in the German author.

The French realists. His attitude towards the French masters of the realistic novel was a mixture of admiration for their technical skill and a rejection of their philosophy. He did not find quite the same contact with French literature as with the English writers who were more adept at redeeming ugliness with humour. Whilst sharing the French tendency towards that which Miskott calls "die Art der objektiven, rein psychoanalytischen Darstellung" (2), he did not, despite his choice of subjects, dwell so exclusively upon the sex-life of his characters; nor do they share the complete moral abandon of some of their French counterparts. The French treatment of the individual's struggle between the rival claims of desire and social responsibility is far more extreme in character than is Fontane's. Despite his French ancestry, Fontane's temperament led him towards restraint and delicacy, in contrast to writers like Balzac, Zola and the Goncourts. Moreover, where we find in the French writers violent revolt and hopeless despair, we have
in Fontane gentle resignation and quiet melancholy.

Zola. Upon first acquaintance with the novels of Zola, Fontane was full of enthusiasm. During a vacation in the Harz in 1883 he began to read the French author's works with great interest, but not without certain criticisms of style. "Frisch, lebendig, voll schildernder Kraft, aber ohne Kunst und Sorgfalt", was his verdict (1). He is more open-minded towards Zola's alien philosophy than towards his careless technique; "In Anschauungen bin ich sehr tolerant, aber Kunst ist Kunst. Da verstehe' ich keinen Spass" (2).

The view of life presented by Zola is, for Fontane, one side of life only; "denn das Schöne, Gott sei Dank, gehört dem Leben gerade so gut an wie das Hässliche" (3). Even if this were not so and life were totally grim, it would still be the artist's duty to make use of "der verklärende Schönheitsschleier" (4). Common ground to both authors is a strongly realistic technique, a mastery of true-to-life conversation, and the use (after a differing fashion) of daring themes. Like Fontane, Zola was also a 'Grossstadtdichter' and interpreted Paris in his own light as Fontane did Berlin in his.
Flaubert. The closest point of contact between Fontane and Flaubert is in Effi Briest, which has much in common with Madame Bovary. In each case, up to the moment of the crisis, the stories run parallel, but after that point they diverge more and more sharply. Whereas Emma Bovary sinks lower and lower into despair and profligacy, Effi is consciously seeking a new life and would have attained it but for the discovery of the fatal letters. The background of the two novels is astonishingly similar; both Effi and Emma are country-bred and are married at an early age to an unsuitable partner. Both live in growing unhappiness and boredom in a small provincial town, where each falls a prey to the charms of a 'man of the world', (Crampas and Rudolf). Even minor details correspond; for example, the use of a riding-excursion to introduce the tragedy, the appearance of a friend and confidant who is a chemist by profession (dieshubler and Ramsis), and the later discovery of love-letters. The most significant difference is, of course, that Emma loves her betrayer, while Effi does not.

The difficulty in estimating Flaubert's influence, apart from this one work, is the strange silence which Fontane has guarded in his correspondence
as far as this subject is concerned, comparing strangely with his many utterances on Zola. But the Effi-Bovary parallel is too strong to deny altogether his acquaintance with the works of the French author, and there is, too, a certain similarity in the conscious cultivation of form and style.

Russian Authors. Turning to the Russian school of realism, we find two names in particular occupying Fontane's attention - that of Tolstoi and, more especially, Turgeniev. "Sie haben Menzel und Turgenjew genannt", Fontane remarks in a letter to Pietsch (1), "und zu beiden blicke ich als zu meinen Meistern und Vorbildern auf." K. Peters, examining this statement (2) finds considerable common ground in the novels of the two authors. Both like to portray the social life of a big city, both are especially interested in the nobility, particularly the landed nobility, and both vent their hatred on the bourgeoisie. In the handling of delicate themes, there is the same consummate tact, while both employ table-talk and conversation generally as a means of characterisation. But although Fontane admired Turgeniev's photographic powers of observation, he deplored the lack of 'Verklärung' in his writing which, as in Zola, can
lead to boredom and depression.

"Ich war heut' ein bisschen 'runter, was ich auf Turgenevs 'Rauch' schieben muss", writes Fontane to Emilie during a holiday at Thale in 1861 (1). He expresses his admiration for Turgenev's painstaking style, but adds: "Dennoch ist es ein Irrweg und ein Verkennen des eigensten innersten Wesens der Kunst" (2).

It might be possible to add another Russian name for comparison with Fontane, namely that of Chekhov. It is extremely doubtful whether there was ever any literary contact between the two, but there is a certain striking resemblance of material and approach.

Firstly, artistic objectivity: Chekhov has stated that "a writer must be as objective as a chemist" (3). Might not Fontane, the former chemist by profession, have written that? Or: "He considered it his business as an artist rather to state the problem correctly than to attempt its solution... but it is clear that he believed fundamental social changes to be both necessary and inevitable", it has been said of Chekhov (4). Does not this apply with equal force to the social outlook of Fontane? Or again: "The evil passions are as inherent in life as the good ones"—a quotation from Chekhov (5) which might well have come from any one of
a whole selection of letters written by Fontane.

Chekhov's hatred of 'poshlost', or social sham, likewise finds its counterpart in Fontane's distaste for 'Heuchelei', which he attacks in all his works and especially in *Frau Jenny Treibel*. Similarly both men relieved the bitterness of their attack with "sly touches of irony, comic comparisons and minor characters verging on caricature" (1), though Chekhov's works are consistently gloomier in tone than those of the German author.

Chekhov, too, found "the best material for his art in marriages that go astray and irregular relationships" (2) - a definition that would cover the whole series of Fontane's novels from the early 'balladesque' work, *Grete Minde*, right through to his last and greatest composition in this sphere, *Effi Briest*. Like Fontane again, Chekhov never lost sight of the social background of his characters, "seeking always to give his pictures... a representative quality" (3).

Ibsen. Fontane viewed this author, too, with the same mixed feelings as in the case of the French and Russian realists; on the one hand he refers
to "den Ibsenschen Eheblödsinn" (1) and criticises his philosophy, lack of artistic beauty, and so forth, while on the other he affirms his "ganz aufrichtige Bewunderung für das, was der Mann getan hat" (2) and maintains: Gewiss ist Ibsen ein grosser Dichter" (3). His balanced view seems to be that contained in the terse definition of the man as "ein segensreicher Revolutionär" (4), for whom he feels "Bewunderung und Dank, denn er ist ein grosser Reformator unseres Bühnenwesens gewesen. Er hat neue Gestalten und vor allem eine neue Sprache geschaffen" (5). Whilst the same objections remain as in the case of the French school, i.e. lack of artistic beauty, he admires Ibsen's power to portray scenes from everyday life. One special point in common is, of course, that they both deal, each in his own individual fashion, with the problems of marriage.

The closest Fontane ever came to Ibsen was in L'Adultera, at the point where Melanie leaves her husband. Unlike Ibsen's Nora, however, who expresses her reasons in tendencious, generalised forms, Melanie remains true to character and one is not conscious of being addressed directly by the author.

1. *Fontane & Melan.* Closely linked with Fontane, the
'Wanderer' and author of Vor dem Sturm, is the name of Alexis. While it is highly probable that he did exert an influence on Fontane, (comparisons have been drawn between Vor dem Sturm and Isegrim and between Schach von Rutenow and Ruhe ist die erste bürgerpflicht), it does not seem at all likely that this influence was considerable enough for Fontane to be called a 'follower' of Alexis. In any case, Fontane was far too independent a writer to be a disciple of any particular school or individual. Whilst both men were deeply interested in the history of the mark, their approach to it in their novels was quite different. Alexis painted on a vast canvas, following Prussian history through whole centuries, giving historical events considerable prominence, sometimes at the expense of his characters. Fontane, on the other hand, was interested first and foremost in the personages themselves, for whom the historical element was principally a background. His approach was also much more detached than that of Alexis, and where the latter describes major historical events in detail, Fontane merely indicates them in a few passing words or even takes the reader's knowledge of them for granted.
Fontane certainly felt a distinct admiration for Alexis; "eine ganz grosse Nummer" (1) he once called him, and thought highly of his works, especially *Isegrim* ("Isegrimm stelle ich sehr hoch", was one of his comments), (2), but it seems probable that they were a starting point for him rather than a model.

2. Fontane and Keller. Certain scenes in Fontane's novels are reminiscent of Keller, e.g. the love of the two children in both *Grete Minze* and *Ellernklipp*, which suggests *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*. Both writers have an objective outlook, though Keller's inventive powers are probably greater, Fontane remaining predominantly an observer. Common to both is a deep understanding of humanity, its problems and its weaknesses, and a burning hatred of moral self-righteousness. In style, they differ chiefly through Keller's stronger powers of description, Fontane preferring to achieve his effect by means of brief, impressionistic sketches and through the medium of dialogue. Moreover Keller is essentially a 'naive' writer, while Fontane is a conscious stylist. Meyer suggests (3) that while Keller represents the completion
of an epoch, "Fontane ist ein grosser Bahnbrecher."

3. **Gutzkow, Freytag and Spielhagen.**

Dresch has made an interesting and valuable study of the relation between our author and three of his contemporaries, namely Gutzkow, Freytag and Spielhagen (1), in which he concludes that the chief link binding all four together is the sincerity which led them to the field of the social novel, which was not at that time a genre in vogue in Germany. Their reasons were varied, but each had a social aim in view. Gutzkow wanted to draw the attention of the nation to a number of vital problems affecting its existence, Freytag to educate the German people in patriotism, Spielhagen to lead men towards his ideal of perfect humanity, and Fontane to induce by literary example less vanity and pretence but greater sincerity and tolerance in social life. What distinguishes Fontane in particular from the other three is his freedom from doctrinaire 'Tendenz', his more intimate, individualistic approach, his proflunder observation, and his emphasis on the human being rather than on classes or political movements.

4. **Raabe.** Raabe shares above all Fontane's love
of small, everyday things and his attitude of 'verzeihende Hinde' towards people, but there is a metaphysical, almost romantic element in Raabe's work which is largely absent in the more rationalistic Fontane.

**Th. Storm**. The two writers, Fontane and Storm, are usually opposites, but their paths do occasionally meet, as for instance in the 'balladesque' novels by Fontane. The early love-scene in _Grete Hinde_ is reminiscent of Storm, and the heavy, autumnal atmosphere of _Ehrenklipp_ also suggests a 'Stimmungsnovelle'. There is a hint of Storm's technique even as late as _Unwiederbringlich_, when Christine steps to her death from the castle-terrace 'down into the cool, clear sea' (1). But despite this occasional use of 'Stimmung', there is no wide basis for comparison. As Conrad Landrey has pointed out (2): "Bei Storm ist Stimmung Ausdruck seines Lebensgefühls und Zentrum seiner Kunst; bei Fontane ein Darstellungsmittel neben anderen".

5. **Fontane's Influence on Thomas Mann**.

Individualist that Fontane was, it is not surprising that he has left no clearly-defined 'school' of followers, but his influence has extended
to no less a present-day writer than Thomas Mann, who has acknowledged his debt of gratitude in the essay Der alte Fontane. In Mann's works we can discover many points in common with Fontane; for example, the wide employment of the 'Landpartie' both in Huddenbrooks and elsewhere (1), his mastery of realistic dialogue, his fondness for gathering his people around the dinner-table, there to inculge in characteristic conversation, the appearance of so many types dear to the heart of old Fontane - schoolmasters, parsons, elderly spinsters, rich merchants, kindly old family physicians and many representatives of the common people. His decadent types, too, bear a distinct resemblance to certain of Fontane's characters, such as Schach von Wuthenow or Waldemar von Haldern, but they have one consolation which Fontane's unhappy young men possessed to a much smaller degree, namely an outlet in creative art. Moreover their decadence is much more strongly marked. That which K. Peters calls "das morbide und Bruchige der Gesellschaft" (2) reaches its fullest artistic expression in the novels of Mann.

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CHAPTER NINE.

Some Distinctive Features of Fontane's
Style and Technique.


Conventional descriptions of 'die schöne Natur' are almost entirely absent in Fontane's novels. The author's reasons were twofold; firstly he was a townsman whose rural knowledge was limited, secondly he was an artist who felt that such descriptions were overdone and trite. The chief rôle of nature in his novels is as a foil for the characters. "Die menschliche Natur bleibt ihm doch immer interessanter als alle 'schöne Natur'", says Meyer (1).

"Die Landschaftsschilderung hat nur noch Wert, wenn sie als künstlerische Folie für einen Stein auftritt, der dadurch doppelt leuchtend wird", Fontane writes in 1873 (2). If, therefore, we find in any one novel more than a passing allusion to the natural background, it is usually because the scene contributes in some special way to the psychological mood of the characters. When this motive is absent, Fontane's
approach to a landscape is that advocated by Bismarck in one of his letters (referred to by Fontane in his correspondence with Liliencron); namely not by describing the entire scene but by discovering the one point in which that particular landscape differs from all others. (1)

As examples of the union of mood between nature and man, we might cite the description of the storm before the murder in Unterm Birnbaum (2), an almost Shakespearean touch, or the ominous atmosphere of the silent, moonlit woods in which Lehnert Menz is planning to murder his enemy, Förster Opitz (3). Kricke draws attention (4) to an unusual example of nature being in direct contrast to the mood of the moment, namely in Lifi Briest, when Instetten views the scene from the steamer on his way to the duel with Crampus. The brightness of the day and the idyllic appearance of the countryside are in stark contrast to the black despair in his heart. He remembers, too, the first time he made this trip with Lifi; then his heart had been gay, but the weather overcast and dreary. (5)

The use of autumnal scenes to emphasise the approaching winter of the soul is widespread in these novels, as is also the motif of 'Sonnenuntergang'.

Just prior to Christine's suicide in Unwiederbringlich, for instance, the autumnal atmosphere is stressed - the mellow morning, the falling leaves and note of gentle decline in nature (1). The deserted, but still kind-hearted Van der Straaten (L'lAdolterg) finds the late-October mood of nature in sympathetic harmony with his own inner loneliness; (2). The first visit of the frail and declining Waldemar von Haldern to Stine's appartment ends with her sad contemplation of the last rays of the setting sun shimmering through the trees outside her windows; (3). Ellernklipp and Grete Mind, the two balladesque novels, are likewise rich in scenes of this type.

In Cécile, nature appears in a different mood, cheerful, almost idyllic at times, probably a reflection of Fontane's own happy holidays spent in the Harz which forms the background of this novel. The amount of space occupied by nature-description here is unusually large. Even so, its principal task is in its relation to people. "Die einsame Natur ist für ihn nicht da", says Wiegand (4). But he goes perhaps too far in adding: "Er kennt nur Garten und Terrassen", though these formalised aspects of nature do play a very important rôle.
One of the chief ways in which out-of-doors scenery plays a part in determining the fate of his characters is in the skilful use he makes of the country excursion. It is this which has earned for him the title of "der Klassiker der Landpartie" (1). These events always have important consequences, for, removed from the customary restraint of urban surroundings, people speak and behave more naturally and freely, tongues are loosened, emotions freed, and crises are brought about. Such turning-points are, for instance, the Landpartie to the Stralauer Wiese in L'Adultera, where Melanie and Hubehn become aware of their love for each other (2), the visit of Botho and Lene to Hankels Ablage (3), which is the "Landespunkt" of the whole novel, representing at one and the same time their highest happiness and the beginning of the end; the excursion to Halensee in Frau Jenny Treibel, too, brings about the engagement of Corinna and Leopold (4) which has such dramatic consequences.

Although Fontane has made only a restricted use of country scenes and rural atmosphere, he has succeeded despite this in producing a 'Stimmung' which is very convincing, so much so that these scenes,
set in the Mark of Brandenburg that he knew so well, make his few other attempts at purely imaginative description appear lifeless and unreal by contrast. In the case of areas not too far distant from the Mark, (e.g. Silesia in part 1 of Quitt, the Harz in Ellernklipp and Cécile, and Holstein in Unwiederbringlich), and which he knew personally, this objection does not apply. On the other hand, settings such as that of Graf Petőyi (Hungary) or the second part of Quitt (America), which were completely unlike his native province and of which he had no personal experience, are largely failures, despite intensive study of the subject. "Büchermachen aus Büchern ist nicht meine Sache", he once admitted to his wife (1).

It is the background of Berlin in which he excels, and to his contemporaries it must have seemed even more convincing, since he introduces many topographical allusions, the names of well-known Berlin public figures of the period, fashionable restaurants and cafés, homely street-names, references to parks and gardens (such as the Invalidenpark and the Zoologischer Garten), and popular resorts on the city outskirts. In fact his picture of the bustling, thriving new capital of the seventies, eighties, and
nineties was so vivid to his readers that they felt it should be possible to pin-point all the places mentioned on a street-map, somewhat to the elderly writer's annoyance.

2. Social Gatherings and Dinners.

One of Fontane's most technically and sociologically valuable contributions in the sphere of Berlin life during the early years of the new Reich is his masterly portrayal of society dinners, particularly those given by the newly-rich industrial class, (e.g. the Treibels). As well as affording an important insight into the manners and values of the period, they provide the author with a vehicle for his excellent conversational technique, at the same time furthering the plot and the psychological development of the story in an unobtrusive and natural fashion. These dinner-parties range in their discussions over a vast field of current topics which were of special interest to Fontane and his contemporaries and which are of scarcely less socio-historical interest to the reader of today. His chief successor in the domain of the literary dinner-party is doubtless Thomas Mann.


We come now to the consideration of
Fontane's dialogue as a whole, which is one of his chief claims to fame. The spoken word is the chief clue to the character of his personages and it is in conversations that we really get to know them. The fact that the reader feels such an intimate, personal acquaintance with these people of the novels is in itself a complete tribute to the effectiveness of Fontane's technique of characterisation through speech.

"Meine ganze Aufmerksamkeit ist darauf gerichtet, die Menschen so sprechen zu lassen, wie sie wirklich sprechen", is the famous Fontane-dictum on this subject (1).

This he has done. From the humblest classes of Berlin's workpeople to the brilliant society gatherings of the aristocracy, he has reproduced for each one a form of speech which is convincing in its utter naturalness. So natural does it sound, that one can almost overlook the fact that here too, the "leicht stilisierende Hand des Dichters" (2) has been at work. "Nicht jedes Stammeln und Stottern seiner Menschen tritt uns entgegen", points out Kricker (3). What we are confronted with is an 'illusion of reality', i.e. real-life speech which has been discreetly 'edited' in accordance with the already-mentioned principles of
'Verklärung' (1). Spielhagen has termed it: "die Quintessenz der Alltagssprache" (2).

Some of his lower-class characters speak in Plattdeutsch, some in a mixture of Hochdeutsch and local dialect. The Berlin working folk are particularly convincing with their haphazard 'Undstil', their exclamations of 'Na', 'Nu', 'Jott', etc., their hackneyed folk-sayings, floods of questions, constant repetition of the other person's name, their slang expressions, confusion over long or unusual words, etc; the whole conversation usually resembling an illogically strung-together series of independent clauses. (E.g., in particular, Frau Rullen, Frau Dörr and Frau Nimptsch, Frau Mohrin.) (3).

The speech of the upper classes is characterised by a 'Geistreichigkeit' in which the author excelled and which is an essential part of the 'Fontanets'. Fashionable Berlin was prone to the use of 'Fremdworter', quotations in English, French and Italian, maxims and proverbs, rhetorical questions, etc. The special virtuosity with which Fontane handled the speech of the officers' club has already been alluded to (4).

It has been objected that all his characters
speak 'fontanesch', and to a very limited extent this is true. There is a certain recognisable 'tone' which occurs throughout, but within that tone there are innumerable gradations, as many as the dialects found within one country having a unified standard language. Compare, for instance, the diversity of the following examples: Van der Straaten's florid, proverbial style, Tante Amélie's Franco-German, the simplicity and directness of Lena Nimptsch as against the aimless chatter of Käthe von Rienacker, the directness of the Junkers and the pretentious verbal camouflage of the bourgeoisie.

Not only does the language determine the social class of the speaker, but it also fixes his type within that class, his individual traits and even his mood at any particular moment. The clue to coming events and psychological developments is nearly always traceable in the utterances of the characters, all of whom are readily moved to speech, either in company or in solitary reflection. Fontane has an effective way, too, of endowing his people with pet phrases which invariably cast a valuable light on their mentality. Legationsrat Duquece, for instance finds everything "überschätzt" (L'Aéulterae), Gendarme
Uncke (Der Stechlin) thinks every remark is "zweideutig", old Briest evades unpleasant topics with the phrase: "Das ist ein zu weites Feld", the music-teacher, Dr. Hirschowitz (Der Stechlin) talks incessantly of "Krittick". Closely allied with this is the technique of characterising people by their hobbies, Fontane's 'Steckenpferd-technik'; e.g. Pastor Seidentopf, the collector, Lehrer Krippenstapel, the bee-keeper, Van der Straaten and his tastes in art. Even the rooms they live in have something typical of their character and outlook (e.g. especially Pauline Pittelkow's home, in Stine.)

As well as the novel-characters, Fontane himself has certain favourite forms of expression which appear again and again. Foremost is his manner of making a sweeping generalisation, sometimes adding a modifying afterthought. E.g."Palme passt immer" (1), "Alle Portiersleute sind eitel" (2). In the case of educated speakers this type of phrase often acquires an erudite tone, e.g. "Rokoko hat immer eine Geschichte" (3), "Alle Klosteruhren gehen nach" (4). Fontane also likes occasionally to introduce new word-forms, some of which have since come into general use; he talks of 'Alter-Fritzen-Verstand', 'altenFritzig', 'der Habe-nun-sach-Mann', and popularises 'Überheblichkeit'.
In the early novels there is still a tendency for the characters to speak 'buchenlautsch', but this is rapidly overcome, and there is an increasing differentiation in the modes of speech as the series continues. The amount of actual narration also shrinks progressively and is replaced more and more by lively, often almost dramatic dialogue which soon becomes the centre of the novel. Sometimes it is in fact almost the whole novel (e.g. Stechlin), for the plot and action are often very slim. No great, complicated or unusual events occur; people meet and talk, go on excursions, give dinners, fall in love, embark on married life, and out of these everyday occurrences great psychological developments ensue, sometimes even ending in tragedy. The undramatic, almost apologetic way in which these tragedies are related brings us to another important point - Fontane's discretion.

4. Discretion and lack of 'Spannung'.

There is never any attempt to make use of the dramatic possibilities of the crucial moments in any of the novels. Dresch has drawn attention to the fact that, far from exploiting his crises, Fontane appears to be trying to avoid them altogether, as far
as he is able. After a long period of psychological preparation, the turning-point, when it arrives, slips past almost unnoticed, and it is only at the end of the novel that the reader looks back and realises the enormous importance of one particular chapter or incident. Often the real crisis is not an outside happening at all, but an inner realisation on the part of one or more of the characters.

"C'est un moment psychologique important, brusquement dévoilé dans l'âme d'un personnage", says Dresch (1).

Sometimes the real cause and motives of the crisis are not related until some time after the reader is aware that something important has happened! (E.g. in Schach von Wuthenow). In any case, it is not so much the climax itself which interests Fontane as its effect on the minds of his characters. "Die eigentliche Welt ist ihm stets die der Seele", Mayne points out (2). Thus it is that his novels are largely based on 'Innenhandlung'; hence too his careful following-up of the subsequent life of the characters, where most other writers would have left off. When the potentially dramatic moment is portrayed, it is done very sparingly and discreetly (e.g. the duel between Instetten and
In Cécile, the duel between St. Arnaud and Von Gordon is described only in a brief paragraph purporting to be a newspaper item, while the death of Cécile herself is communicated to the reader merely through a letter addressed to her husband, St. Arnaud. The discussions and plans leading up to the murder of the Polish traveller in Unterm Birnbaum are not passed on to the reader at all, and he is left completely in the dark except for vague suspicions until the discovery of the apparent 'accident'. Such 'Spannung' as there is in this unconventional crime-story consists of the aftermath - will Kradschek be found out? One other slight example of the use of tension is the mystery surrounding Cécile's past, at which Fontane hints at intervals until its sudden revelation in a letter received by Von Gordon. Such examples are extremely rare.

Fontane's artistic delicacy is reinforced by this technique of sparing indication. Consider, for instance, the omission of all intimate scenes in Irrungen, Irrungen, or the relation ofitti Briest's misconduct as an accomplished fact. This careful approach spared the contemporary reader's susceptib-
ilities and saved the themes from becoming offensive. Even apart from subjects likely to provoke moral indignation, such as marital unfaithfulness, irregular relationships, duels, death-scenes, etc., Fontane seems to have followed this technique of discretion as a matter of principle. Note, for example, the incredibly restrained indication of Armgard's betrothal in Der Stechlin; the reader can hardly believe it is possible. Observe, too, the deliberate choice of moment for the discovery of the love-letters in Effi Briest, namely when Effi is away and there is no possibility of a dramatic crisis.

Scenes of sustained emotion were not in accordance with Fontane's taste or temperament, nor did he feel able to portray them successfully. He preferred the sparing suggestion of the ballad-writer. In the words of Schilenther (1): "Fontane ist kein Ausmaler, sondern ein Andeuter". The reader is left to guess a great deal; why, for example, did Cécile react so peculiarly to certain remarks made during the sight-seeing tours in the Harz, and why did the high-ranking army officer greet her and St. Arnaud at the station without coming over to speak to either of them?
"Sein ideal ist eine diskrete, verhüllende, aufs Erratenlassen gestellte Kunst", says Pniower of the author (1).

5. "Das Kleine''.

"Ich behandle das Kleine mit derselben Liebe wie das Grosse", wrote Fontane in 1883.

While important events and major crises were dealt with sparingly, small events were often lingered over with affection by the novelist. Namely little scenes, the intimate, ordinary things of everyday life were Fontane's special métier; "l'amour du petit fait", as Dresch calls it (2). In these he found the representative qualities of people and social classes - 'das Genrehafte'. Hence, too, his preference for 'kleiner Stil' in opposition to the prevailing tradition. "Was heisst grosser Stil?", asks Ebba in Unwiederbringlich; "Grosser Stil heisst soviel, wie vorbeigehen an allem, was die Menschen eigentlich interessiert." (3) We might equally well have found this remark in one of Fontane's own letters, for it is the belief which guides his selection of material - people rather than plot, everyday problems rather than world-shattering ones, and, where circumstances permit,
the quiet, interesting by-ways in preference to the bustling main roads of life.

6. 'Einlagen'.

We spend quite a lot of time wandering along these quiet lanes, away from the main action, in Fontane's novels. Sometimes it is an interesting and valuable experience, sometimes (especially in the earlier works, above all Vor dem Sturm) it can be exasperating. Digressions from the main theme, insertions of irrelevant material, and retarding elements are a characteristic feature of the Fontane novels, and if one had to point to one single major weakness in the author, this would seem to be the obvious choice. Often the substance of these 'Einlagen' is highly interesting on its own merits; sometimes it is boring to the modern reader. In both cases it is disturbing to the general progress of the story. The further away one gets from the early works, the more this tendency towards digression and superabundance of unimportant detail is restrained, for the author's 'Stilgerüth' told him that it was his weakness, and when the priest is reached, there is little which can be said to have no bearing upon the main theme.
The chapters in *Vor dem Sturm*, for instance, which deal with Greenland, the 'Spanische Erinnerungen', and 'Lorocino' are all totally unconnected with the story, whatever their individual merits. So, in many respects, is the account of Frau Hulen's supper-party, though no-one would wish to miss this little Berlin novel in miniature, one of the finest chapters in the book.

*L'Adultera*, as well as marking the beginning of a new setting and a new subject-matter, heralds the victory of artistic discipline over the 'Einlage', although this tendency persists in minor form right to the very end. (E.g. again in Cécile, for example, there is the long digression on the subject of the Prüzeptor von Altenbrak.) Sometimes themes which were of considerable topical interest to the reader of the 1880's and 90's are introduced during the dinner-table conversations; they may still be of interest to us today, or at any rate of sociological value, or, on the other hand, they may be quite meaningless. Fontane used his characters' casual conversations to expatiate on subjects which attracted him personally, whether or not they were connected with the novel; (See *Der Stechlin* especially.) Excursions were often made the excuse for
Haedeker-like descriptions of old churches, museums and art-galleries — traces of the 'Wanderer' again; the appearance of clergymen or scholars is sometimes the signal for prolonged discussions of theology, art or literature.

"Plaudern ist sein eigentliches Talent", is the judgment of Frenzel (1); "... man empfängt schliesslich den Eindruck einer frei vorgetragenen, nicht den einer niedergeschriebenen Geschichte", he adds.

Anecdotes, letters, diary-excerpts all abound in Fontane's works, occasionally giving them an episodic character. (In the introduction to meine Kindерjahre he admits his "Vorliebe für Anekdotisches".) But it does not follow that they are fundamentally lacking in form. He was very conscious of the demands of style and construction, but he has his own interpretation of these demands. Writing to his publisher in 1881, he says: "Ich bilde mir nämlich ein... ein Stilist zu sein." (2) As far as his individual chapters are concerned, there is every evidence of this; it is the relation of the chapters to each other and to the work as a whole where objections may sometimes be raised. The construction of the entire work is in many of the novels (but by no means in all) a somewhat loose affair
and the requirements of the novel-form have to give way to those of the chapter, as understood by Fontane. One of the ways in which this becomes apparent, apart from the 'Einlagen' which we have discussed, is in the profusion of characters in the early novels and again, right at the end, in Der Stechlin. Each chapter, which is a little novel in itself, requires for its completeness a whole series of characters, some of whom never appear again. Thus the sum total (especially in Vor dem Sturm) is apt to be quite bewildering!

Fontane spent a great deal of time on what he calls his "Pularbeit" (1) - the revision and polishing of the individual chapters, and this "Burchfeilung" took him far longer than the composition of the story itself or the conception of the characters. Its summit was reached in the stylistic care he devoted to Effi Briest which, Dresch thinks (2), earned him more than any other work the title of "der Klassiker des Realismus".

Franz Servaes has summed up his novelistic technique in words which so well reflect Fontane the man that they will bear reproduction in full:

"Als Romanschreiber bleibt er sozusagen
ein Spaziergänger und reift frohgemut und unbedenklich alles zusammen, was ihm am Wegwein entgegenblüht. Stets bleibt ihm Zeit, hier im Vorübergehen eine Blume abzupflücken, dort auf der Wiese ein wenig auszuruhren... Die edle artistische Tugend, rechtzeitig aufzuhalten, fehlt diesem Frohlaunigen Umherschweifer und Abschweifer gänzlich" (1).

7. His Humour.

Finally, a special word must be said on Fontane's highly individual type of humour. It was a quality which he demanded in some degree from all writers and on which he laid particular stress in his own works. He did not, of course, write 'humorous novels' as such; "Nicht lautes Lachen, sondern stilles Lächeln" (2) is his approach. But this 'Lächeln' is no sickly or anaemic product; as an indication of its robust source we turn once again to his private letters. There we find, amongst his many serious and even despairing utterances, outbursts of open and forthright humour which has a peculiarly modern appeal in its satirical brevity. Had the present-day vogue for this kind of approach been in operation in Fontane's day, we might well have seen a
secondary line of development in the direction suggested by the fresh, infectious boisterousness of the short story about the Fresh-air friend, Unkel Dodo. The modern reader, searching through Fontane's family correspondence, is still convulsed by some of his intimate little sketches; 'literary cartoons' one might almost call them: Fontane braving the irony of the London cabbies in his old-fashioned fur coat (1), Fontane going with his "lange Mähne" to the hairdresser after cautiously awaiting the advent of spring, only to emerge after this "Verschönerungsakt" into a howling gale (2), Fontane going for an audience with the King of Bavaria, his cracked patent-leather shoes filled out by dint of wearing three pairs of socks (3), his description of a melancholy party, where the guests consisted of the "Grippe-habende", who had stayed away, and the "Grippe-kriegenende", who wished they had been as sensible as the others (4), or of the other party where "Professor Fontane" sat down to dine upon a redoubtable dish ("zu dem unser Lübke das Urrezept besitzt; ein Löffel voll tötet drei Mann;") in the company of no less than twenty adoring ladies whose contortions of laughing amiability reminded him of
"Laokoon unter den Schlangen" (1).

From this robust and healthy source is distilled the delicate and subtle humour of his novels - a humour of a very different type.... "einen köstlichen, leichten humor, der so kristallklar und durchsichtig ist bis auf den Grund seines liebreichen Herzens",
Servaes calls it (2). Nearest to the naïve, unschooled humour of his letters is that of Frau Jenny Treibel, but even in the most tragic novels, this quality is still present as a quiet undertone, offsetting the resigned and gentle melancholy of his pessimism. He is a master at employing humour as a means of relieving tragedy, rather in the Shakespearean tradition, the result being: "eine humoristisch-ironische Verklärung eines sehr ernsten, sich dahinter verbergenden Pessimismus." (3)

In the face of iron laws which he was unable to deny or in any way modify, Fontane allows the people of his novels to succumb to tragedies which are partially inevitable, partly of their own making. As an author, he remains cool, detached and undramatic, offering sympathy to his characters where he cannot offer them help, and gentle humour to the
reader, where there is no escape for him from the unpalatable facts of human existence. He follows events, "betrachtend wie der antike Chor" (1), pointing out, warning, reporting, but never interfering with the natural course of events. He judges sparingly and forgivingly, where he does so at all, and upon his lips there is a smile of tolerant understanding, of 'heiteres Darüberstehen', "denn der beste Weg ist der des Humors." (2)
CHAPTER TEN.

Conclusion. Fontane's Novels Today.

During his lifetime Fontane sometimes expressed the fear that perhaps nothing beyond a few of his ballads would survive him. In view of the upheavals of the half-century which has passed since his death, sweeping away almost the entire society which he has depicted, one might have expected his gloomy predictions to come true. Instead of this, his position in the foremost rank of recent German writers is assured and his circle of readers is far wider than it ever was during his lifetime. Nor is it just because of the undoubted socio-historical value of his novels, which are acknowledged to embody the spirit of the period in a way that few of his contemporaries could rival. It is their intrinsic artistic merit which has assured for the author a permanent place in German literature.

This frank and fearless reformer, with his quiet, sober and objective outlook on the society and life of his time, his unusually penetrating powers of observation and mastery of language, has given posterity
a picture of his homeland, his fellow-countrymen and their life and problems through which shines the light of his own warm, understanding, tolerant personality - the spirit of a man who, despite frustration and embitterment, tried to bring kindness and sympathy to others.

"Bringe, so lang’ es geht, Dingen und Personen Liebe entgegen; das erworbt einem auch Liebe", he once wrote to his wife (1).

For Theodor Fontane, like Dubslav von Stechlin, possessed that which time cannot touch; ....

"das was immer gilt und immer gelten wird; ein Herz." (2)
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Abbreviations: The occasional title-abbreviations (such as Irr. Mrr.) are usually self-explanatory.

F.B.I & II = Briefe an seine Familie, Vols. 1 & 2.

Br. Fr. I & II = Briefe an seine Freunde, "

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(Sources of quotations etc. given in the text.)

   (2) " " 1, 301.

4. (1) " " 13, 434.
   (2) " " 433-34.
   (3) " " 9, 391.

5. (1) " " 386.
   (2) " " 386-7.
   (3) " " 16, 471.

   (2) Ditto.
   (3) V. 20-30, P. 126.

7. (1) K.J. Chapt. 1, P. 305.
   (2) C. F. Th. Mann & 'Bürger-Künstler' conflict.
   (3) See K.J. Chapt. 3, P. 324.

8. (1) See Fr. Schönemann, Th. F. als Märker, P. 391.
   (2) Briefe II. Sammlung, I. 189.

9. (1) K.J. Chapt. 6, P. 349.
   (2) K.J. " 3, P. 328.

    (2) " P. 141.
   (2) " " 18, 501.
12. (1) V. 20 - 30, P. 91.
13. (1) " ", 401.
15. (1) V. 20 - 30, P. 153.
   (2) See opinion of Konrad Peters, P. 61.
17. (1) V. 20 - 30, PP. 162 - 3.
   (2) F.B.I, P. 11.
   (3) See Dresch, 'Le Roman Social...' (Fontane).
18. (1) See 'Ein Sommer in London', P. 32.
19. (1) Introduction to 'Wanderungen'.
   (2) F.B.II, P. 22.
21. (1) F.B.I, P. 93.
22. (1) 'Th. F. posthumus', Lit. Echo, 1.11.1905.
   (2) F.B.I, P. 55.
23. (1) F.B.I, 79.
25. (1) F.B.I, P. 55.
29. (1) Servaes, P. 33.
   (2) F.B.II, P. 18.
(2) Schlenther; Intro; Fischer edition, XXIX.

(2) Br. Fr. II, P. 83-4.

Page 34. (1) Schlenther; Intro. of Fischer ed; XXXVIII.
(2) Dresch, P. 306.
(3) Maync, Lit. Echo 23.

Page 35. (1) F.E. II, 31.
(2) Hesse Ed. 3, P. 349.

Page 36. (1) F.E. I, 112.
(2) " "
(3) Goethe; Zum Gedächtnis ac; D.R.182, 1920.
(4) See 'Wanderungen', end vol. 1 (Spreeland).

Page 37. (1) Bieber; Kampf um die Tradition, P. 440.
(3) " "

Page 40. (1) Maync; Th. F. 1819-1919, P. 15.
(2) Br. Fr. II, P. 59.


Page 47. (1) See Gilbert, Palaestra 174, P. 126.

Page 48. (1) Th. Mann; 'der alte Fontane', P. 559.
(2) Wegner P. 119.

Page 49. (1) " 137.
50. (1) Petersen P.10.

51. (1) See also chapter on P's politics.
    (2) Der Stechlin, P. 32.
    (3) " 206.

52. (1) Servaes, P.53.

53. (1) 1st manuscript version, Der Stechlin, Last chapt.
    (2) F.B.I, P. 130.
    (3) See letter to Morris; Br.Fr.II, P. 380.
    (4) F.B.I. P. 313.

54. (1) F.B.I; P. 313.
    (2) See J. Petersen; P's Altersroman.
    (3) Br. Fr. I, P. 247.

55. (1) Conrad Wandrey, P. 114.
    (2) Biese, P.350.

56. (1) C. Wandrey, P.115.

57. (1) E. Croner, P. 10.

58. (1) L.A. Shears (Scott & Fon.) P.38.
    (2) E. Croner P.11.
    (3) C. Wandrey, P. 130.
    (4) E. Croner, P.11.

59. (1) Stern P. 205.

60. (1) Stine P.42.
    (2) C. Wandrey, P. 242.
        (2) See R. Parks on this problem.

" 69. (1) See P.54 of thesis.

" 70. (1) "  "   215.
        (2) C. Wandrey, P.232.
        (3) Irr. Wrr. P. 244.

" 71. (1) "  " PP. 290, 291 & others.
        (2) C. Wandrey, P.232.

" 72. (1) H. Spiero, P. 260.
        (2) Ettlinger P. 41.
        (3) See Wandrey.

" 73. (1) Effi Briest; P. 454.
        (2) "  "   387.
        (3) "  "   448.

" 75. (1) Schlenther; intro. to Fischer ed; LXIV.

" 76. (1) E. Schmidt, P. 244.
        (2) Effi Briest; P. 140.
        (3) "  "   364.

" 78. (1) E. Croner, P. 136.

" 79. (1) See U. Wiskott.

" 81. (1) See Br. Fr. II, P.388.
        (2) Der Stechlin P. 440 - 41.
        (3) "  "   243.
        (4) Frenzel P.74.
Page 82.

(1) Der Stechlin, P. 435.
(2) Poppenberg P. 749 (Nation 52.)
(3) Der Stechlin, P. 429.
(4) " " 317.

85. (1) See X.J. 435-6.
(2) V. 20-30. P. 141.
(3) " 140.

88. (1) " 386.
(2) " 403.
(3) F.B.I., P. 9.

89. (1) Wandrey P. 252.
(2) See F.B.II, P. 90.
(3) See Schlenther's Intro. P. 50.

90. (1) Dresch P. 330.
(2) See Hoethe, P. 124.

92. (1) Schlenther's Intro. P. 50.

93. (1) Ettlinger; Th.F.; Bd.18, 'Die Lit'.

96. (1) See Croner on this point.

98. (1) Frau J.T. P. 490.

99. (1) Ettlinger P. 44.
(2) Dresch P. 330.

100. (1) Croner P. 130.

101. (1) " 75ff.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>(1)</th>
<th>K. Bramstedt; 'Arist. &amp; Middle Cl.'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>J.W. Parkes: 'The Jewish Problem'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>Carl Busse; Lit. Echo, 15. 4. 1905.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 105  | (1) | Stechlin 377. |
|      | (2) | " " " |


| 107  | (1) | " " " 243. |
|      | (2) | " " " 245. |
|      | (3) | " " " 432. |
|      | (4) | " " " 442. |

| 108  | (1) | P.E.II, P.284. |
|      | (2) | " 285. |

| 109  | (1) | " |
|      | (2) | " 316-17. |
|      | (3) | " " |

| 110  | (1) | " 180. |
|      | (2) | " " |

| 111  | (1) | " 325. |

| 112  | (1) | Roethe P.130. |

| 113  | (1) | Ettlinger P. 59. |
|      | (2) | Vor dem Sturm, P.562. |
|      | (3) | Grete Linde, P. 634. |

| 114  | (1) | " |
|      | (2) | " 361. |

| 115  | (1) | " |

| 116  | (1) | " |

| 117  | (1) | " |

| 118  | (1) | " |

| 119  | (1) | " |
|      | (2) | " 361. |
Page 120. (1) Frau J.T. P. 361.
(2) " 369.
(3) Stechlin, P. 379.
" 121. (1) " 353.
" 122. (1) Effi Briest, P. 346.
" 123. (1) Stechlin, P. 388.
" 125. (1) " 208.
(2) See intro. to Wanderungen.
(3) Schlenther, Intro.ILV (Fischer ed.)
" 127. (1) Stine P. 31.
" 128. (1) " 40.
" 129. (1) E. Croner, P. 60.
" 130. (1) Dresch P. 329.
" 131. (1) Ettlinger, P. 34.
" 132. (1) E. Croner, P. 63.
(2) Irr. Wirr. P. 118.
" 137. (1) Vor dem Sturm, P. 474.
" 138. (1) Schach, P. 279.
(2) Gr. Petöfy, P. 508.
" 139. (1) L'Adultera, P. 89.
" 140. (1) " 105.
" 141. (1) Frau J.T. P. 444.
(2) " 448.
Page 142. (1) Quitt, P. 59

143. (1) W. Briest, P. 446.

144. (1) Th. Mann, Anzeige eines P.-Buches.

145. (1) Stechlin, P. 136.
(2) Petersen, P. 36.
(3) Soergel, P. 266.

146. (1) Ettlinger, P. 59.

147. (1) P.B.II, P. 274.

148. (1) V. 20-30., P. 394.

149. (1) " 404.
(2) " 
(3) " 413.

150. (1) K.J. P. 423.
(2) V. 20-30. P. 406.

151. (1) " 415-17.
(2) " 414.
(3) P.B.II, 289-290.
(4) See Aus den Tagen der Okkupation.

(2) P.B.II, P. 316.

153. (1) 'Fester Befehl', written before 1889.
(2) P.B.I, 249.
(3) " 
(4) " 252-3.
(2) V. 20-30. footnote p. 314.

155.  (1) " P. 385.
(2) Er. Fr. II, P. 37.
(3) " 248.
(4) F.B.II, P. 331.

156.  (1) V. 20-30. P. 383.
(2) F.B.II, P. 331.
(3) See Fontane-Buch, P. 172.

157.  (1) F.B.II, P. 143.
(2) " 166.
(3) " 101
(4) " 165.
(6) Er. Fr. I, P. 378.

158.  (1) F.B.II, P. 160.
(2) " "
(3) " 101.

159.  (1) Stechlin, P. 412.


(2) " 384.
(3) " 452.
Page 151 (cont.)
(4) Br. Fr. II, P. 427.
(5) F.B.II, P. 161.

162. (1) Br. Fr. II, P. 318.
(2) " " 434-35.
(3) " " 445.
(4) " " 453.
(5) " " 365.
(6) " " 446.

163. (1) F.B.II, P. 318.
(2) F.B.I, P. 305-6.
(3) F.B.II, P. 163.

164. (1) F.B.II, P. 318.
(2) F.B.I, P. 305-6.
(3) F.B.I, P. 297.
(4) " " 434-35.
(5) " " 446.

165. (1) F.B.II, P. 366.
(2) F.B.I, P. 297.
(3) " " 434-35.
(4) " " 446.

166. (1) F.B.II, 261.
(2) Maync (Pont. 1819-1919) P.14.
(3) Stechlin, P. 317.

167. (1) See Maync, P. 14. (P. 1819-1919.)

168. (1) V. 20-39; P. 95.
(2) " " 445-6.

170. (1) See L'Adultera, Pr. 31-35.
(2) See L'Adulterer PP.31-35.

(3) Ditto.

" 171. (1) "

(2) See Cecile, PP. 312-17.


(2) Br. Fr. II, 36-37.

(3) " " , 42.

" 173. (1) " " 

(2) " 256.

" 174. (1) " 304.

(2) " 346-7.

(3) F.B. II, P. 83.

" 175. (1) " 254.

(2) " 300-301.

" 176. (1) " 308-9.

(2) See Dresch; Le Roman Social &c (Font.)

" 177. (1) Dresch P. 358.

(2) See letter to Morris, Br. Fr. II, 435.

(3) Koethe; Zum Gedächtnis &c, D.R. 182.

(4) R. Park, P. 43.

" 178. (1) V. 20-30; P. 385.

" 180. (1) F.B.II, P. 51.

(2) " 36.

(3) F.B.I. P. 235.
Page 186.  (1) Schach, PP. 294-5.
            (2) Petöry, P. 508.

" 188.  (1) See R. Parks on this point.

            (2) " 215.
            (3) "  
            (4) " 118.

" 192.  (1) Misi Priest, P. 264.
            (2) " 385.

" 195.  (1) See Croner P. 66.
            (2) " 14.

" 196.  (1) See Mayne (Th. F; 1819-1919), P. 23.
            (2) F.B.II, P. 136.

" 197.  (1) Gilbert, PP. 19-20.

" 198.  (1) See Kricker, PP.15ff.
            (2) F.B.I, P. 166.
            (3) Br. Fr. II, P. 116.

" 199.  (1) "  
            (2) F.B.II, P.31.
            (3) F.B.I, P.72.

" 200.  (1) Dresch P.281.

" 201.  (1) See Wiegand P.481 on this point.
            (2) See Alex. Meyer (Nation 1897-8).
            (3) E. Bertram, P.174.
Page 202. (1) F.B.II, P.130.
(2) " 262.
(3) " 182.
(4) Shears, P.M.L.A. 1923.
(5) F.B.II, P.152.
(6) " 150.
(7) Ellernklipp, P.71.

Page 203. (1) L'Adultera, P.19.
(2) Stechlin, P. 434-5.

Page 204. (1) F.B.II, P.156.
(2) Fischer ed. of 'erzähl. Schriften; P.28.
(3) Heilborn, P.1302 (Fontane-Denkmal).
(4) Maync (Th. F. 1819-1919), P.22.

Page 205. " 207 (1) " " " "

(2) " 145-6.

Page 208. (1) " 290.
(2) " 24.
(3) Fr. Schönesmann, P.227.
(4) Heilborn (Fischer ed.) P. 513-14.

(2) See Maync (Th.F. 1819-1919), P.34.
(3) Br. Fr. 11, P.219.
(4) Ditto " " 
Page 212. (1) F.B.II, P.232.
(2) F.B.I, P.314.
(3) See Br. Fr. II, P.219.

214. (1) Maync (Th.F 1819-1919) P.34.
(2) " " 34-35.
(3) Br. Fr. II, P.219.

215. (1) See H. Geffcken; Ästhet. Probl. &c.
(2) " "; 34-35.
(3) Geffcken P. 353.
(4) See Ettlinger on this point.
(5) See his essay on Alexis; also

K. Peters, P.10.

216. (1) Maync (etc), P.36.

(2) " "; 273.

218. (1) K. Peters, P.50.
(2) F.B.I, P.149.
(3) " "
(4) " "

219. (1) " 156.
(2) " 160.
(3) " 247.
(4) " "
(5) " 248.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page 220.</th>
<th>(1) Shears' (Scott &amp; Fon.) P.76.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) See A. Paul, P.41 on this point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221.</td>
<td>(1) Unwiederbringlich, P.428.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Br. Fr. II, P.376.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222.</td>
<td>(1) F.B.I, P.24.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) See Gilbert P.22.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>223.</td>
<td>(1) See Gilbert P.22.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) Wiskott P.136.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>224.</td>
<td>(1) F.B.II, P.29.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) &quot; 33.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) &quot; 35.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4) &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>225.</td>
<td>(1) Br. Fr. II, P.104.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) K. Peters, P.37.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226.</td>
<td>(1) F.B.I, P.315.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Bruford, P.18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4) &quot; 41.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5) &quot; 18.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>227.</td>
<td>(1) &quot; 214.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) &quot; 195.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) &quot; 215.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228.</td>
<td>(1) &quot; 214.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) &quot; 195.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) &quot; 215.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>229.</td>
<td>(1) Br. Fr. II, P.207.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) &quot; 466.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Page 229 (cont.)

(3) Br. Fr. II, P.300.
(4) " "
(5) " 465.

" 231. (1) Br. Fr. II, P.334.
(2) " 6.
(3) Meyer, P.549.

" 232. (1) Dresch; Le Roman Social &c.

" 233. (1) See Spiro, P.259.
(2) Mandrey P.153.

" 234. (1) See Buddenbrooks Pt.5, Ch.6; Pt.6, Ch.6 &c.
(2) K. Peters, P.43.

" 235. (1) Meyer P.554.
(2) See Nachlass (Ron. 1905 ed. XIX, 211.)

(2) Unterm Birnbaum, P.335.
(3) Luit, P.90-95.
(5) Effi Briest, P.390.

" 237. (1) Unwiederbringlich, P.643.
(2) L'Adultera, P.158.
(3) Stine, P.51.
(4) Wiegand, P.461.

" 238. (1) Meyer, P.569.
(2) L'Adultera, PP. 58-79.
Page 238 (cont.)  (3) Irr. Irr.; PP. 178-206.

(4) Frau J.T. PP. 416-436.

239.  (1) F.B.I, P. 216.

241.  (1) F.B.II, P. 22.

(2) Kricker, P. 140.

(3) " "


(2) See Kricker 140 & Br. Fr.II, 147-8.

(3) See Gilbert on this subject.

(4) See Chapt. 2 of thesis.

244.  (1) L'Adultera, P. 92.

(2) Stechlin, P. 171.

(3) " 25.

(4) " 92.

246.  (1) Dresch P. 308.

(2) Maync &c. P. 18.

248.  (1) Schlenther (Intro. Fischer ed.) XLIII-IV.

249.  (1) Phiower (Effi B.) P. 246.

(2) Dresch P. 286.

(3) Unwiederbringlich, P. 558.

252.  (1) Frenzel, P. 154.

(2) Br. Fr. II, P. 33.


(2) Dresch P. 344.