

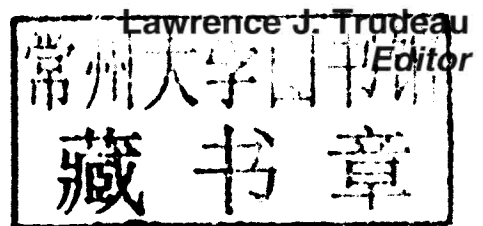
# Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

TCLC 307

Volume 307

# Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Criticism of the  
Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,  
Short-Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers  
Who Lived between 1900 and 1999,  
from the First Published Critical  
Appraisals to Current Evaluations**



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## Preface

Since its inception *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC)* has been purchased and used by some 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. *TCLC* has covered more than 1000 authors, representing over 60 nationalities and nearly 50,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as *TCLC*. In the words of one reviewer, “there is nothing comparable available.” *TCLC* “is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many librarians would have difficulty assembling on their own.”

## Scope of the Series

*TCLC* is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1999 and to the most significant interpretations of these author's works. The great poets, novelists, short-story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of the period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, *TCLC* helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in *TCLC* presents a comprehensive survey of an author's career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Volumes 1 through 87 of *TCLC* featured authors who died between 1900 and 1959; beginning with Volume 88, the series expanded to include authors who died between 1900 and 1999. Beginning with Volume 26, every fourth volume of *TCLC* was devoted to literary topics. These topics widen the focus of the series from the individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers. With *TCLC* 285, the series returned to a standard author approach, with some entries devoted to a single important work of world literature and others devoted to literary topics.

*TCLC* is part of the survey of criticism and world literature that is contained in Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism (NCLC)*, *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800 (LC)*, *Shakespearean Criticism (SC)*, and *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism (CMLC)*.

## Organization of the Book

A *TCLC* entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** cites the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the author's actual name given in parentheses on the first line of the biographical and critical introduction. Also located here are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose native languages use nonroman alphabets. Uncertain birth or death dates are indicated by question marks. Single-work entries are preceded by a heading that consists of the most common form of the title in English translation (if applicable) and the author's name (if applicable).
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication information of each work is given. In the case of works not published in English, a translation of the title is provided as an aid to the reader; the translation is a published translated title or a

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- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Citations conform to recommendations set forth in the Modern Language Association of America's *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (2009).
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An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *TCLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of titles published in other languages and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, plays, nonfiction books, and poetry, short-story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks. All titles reviewed in *TCLC* and in the other Literary Criticism Series can be found online in the *Gale Literary Index*.

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When citing criticism reprinted in the Literary Criticism Series, students should provide complete bibliographic information so that the cited essay can be located in the original print or electronic source. Students who quote directly from reprinted criticism may use any accepted bibliographic format, such as Modern Language Association (MLA) style or University of Chicago Press style. Both the MLA and the University of Chicago formats are acceptable and recognized as being the current standards for citations. It is important, however, to choose one format for all citations; do not mix the two formats within a list of citations.

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Kuester, Martin. "Myth and Postmodernist Turn in Canadian Short Fiction: Sheila Watson, 'Antigone' (1959)." *The Canadian Short Story: Interpretations*. Ed. Reginald M. Nischik. Rochester: Camden House, 2007. 163-74. Rpt. in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*. Ed. Thomas J. Schoenberg and Lawrence J. Trudeau. Vol. 206. Detroit: Gale, 2008. 227-32. Print.

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# Contents

Preface vii

Acknowledgments xi

Advisory Board xiii

<b>George Ade 1866-1944</b> .....	1
<i>American journalist, playwright, and writer of sketches and fables</i>	
<b>Hermann Broch 1886-1951</b> .....	83
<i>Entry devoted to the trilogy The Sleepwalkers (1931-32)</i>	
<b>Theresa Hak Kyung Cha 1951-1982</b> .....	193
<i>Korean-born American poet, autobiographer, filmmaker, visual artist, and performance artist</i>	

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Author Index 325

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Topic Index 447

TCLC Cumulative Nationality Index 469

TCLC-307 Title Index 477

# George Ade

## 1866-1944

(Also wrote under the pseudonym John Hazelden) American journalist, playwright, and writer of sketches and fables.

### INTRODUCTION

Although virtually unknown today, at the turn of the twentieth century, George Ade was regarded as the leading humor writer in America. First in a regular newspaper column titled “Stories of the Streets and of the Town” and then in numerous collections of humorous sketches and fables, he illustrated social and cultural change in the modern American city through depictions of Chicago’s increasingly diverse population.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Chicago underwent a massive expansion, the result of large-scale migrations after the Civil War, increased immigration from abroad, and an influx of rural workers looking for jobs in the city’s factories. Ade documented the behavior of the people he saw on the streets of Chicago, most notably by reproducing the idiosyncratic details of their spoken American English. He focused on the lives of otherwise unrecorded individuals, the ordinary men and women who lived and died in relative obscurity, and chronicled those lives with compassion and humor, infusing his tales with pathos, gently mocking but never diminishing the individuals he portrayed. Ade’s fame did not last. He is now largely unread except by American literary historians and scholars of American writing.

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Ade was born in Kentland, Indiana, on 9 February 1866, one of six children of John Ade, an English immigrant, and his wife, Adaline, an Ohio native. The family scraped by on John’s income as a cashier, and Ade enjoyed a fairly conventional rural childhood, working on local farms during the summer while excelling in writing and literature as a young student. In 1883, after finishing high school, Ade moved to West Lafayette to attend Purdue University, then a newly minted agricultural college. At Purdue, he became engaged in a literary society, edited the school literary magazine for a semester, and enjoyed the attractions at the Lafayette Grand Opera House, particularly the operettas of W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. After earning a bachelor’s degree, as one of eight students in his graduating class, Ade remained in West Lafayette, briefly studying law before working as a beat reporter and an advertising

writer. In 1890, he moved to Chicago to join his college friend John T. McCutcheon, an illustrator, on the staff of the newspaper the *Morning News* (renamed the *Record* shortly thereafter). Ade began writing weather stories, but he rose rapidly through the reporting ranks. Within a few years, he had his choice of assignments, covering significant events in politics, industry, and sports.

In 1893, in honor of the Chicago World’s Fair, Ade teamed up with McCutcheon to produce a daily column titled “All Roads Lead to the World’s Fair,” which featured illustrated vignettes about the fair’s exhibits and visitors. The series ran successfully for six months, prompting the *Record* to commission Ade to write similar pieces, also illustrated by McCutcheon, about the city and people of Chicago. Titled “Stories of the Streets and of the Town,” the column ran for seven years, resulting in nearly 1,800 stories. Although the series was published anonymously, Ade was widely known as the author, and his writing drew praise from such luminaries as Mark Twain and William Dean Howells.

In the mid-1890s, the column became more innovative as Ade used different literary forms and experimented with vernacular expression. He began to create recurring fictional characters, whose stories were collected and published in book form as *Artie* (1896), *Pink Marsh* (1897), and *Doc’ Home* (1899), bringing the author to the attention of a national audience. In 1897, he began to write what became known as his “fables in slang,” humorous pieces modeled on Aesop’s fables—each tale ends with a moral—but using Ade’s own slang-filled style and modern subjects. These pieces were syndicated nationally and collected in ten volumes appearing between 1900 and 1920, making Ade a rich man. He bought stretches of Indiana farmland and built a vast estate he called Hazelden. Ade left the newspaper business in 1900, turning briefly to playwriting. Plays such as *The College Widow* (1904) and *The Sultan of Sulu* (1902) were popular but not enduringly so. During his later years, Ade became involved in local and national politics, raising money for Purdue and for the Republican Party. He used his wealth to support friends in dire straits and to entertain friends and neighbors, throwing elaborate events at Hazelden in the style of an old-fashioned, manorial lord. Ade died on 16 May 1944 after a short illness, following a stroke.

### MAJOR WORKS

Between 1893 and 1900, Ade produced some three hundred of the “Stories of the Streets and of the Town” each year. As his confidence as a writer increased, he began developing

the recurring characters—Artie, Pink, and Doc' Horne—whose linked stories were collected in book form. The stories in *Artie* demonstrate Ade's view of language as a living, changing form of communication, as well as his developing interest in documenting local vernaculars. The jive-talking and streetwise young Artie narrates the events of his life, which include his attempts to woo his girlfriend, Mame, and daily conversations with his sidekick, Miller. Although many critics have referred to Ade's linguistic style as "slang," he objected to the ephemerality of that term, preferring to use the word "vernacular." Regardless, later critics have noted that the language Ade recorded is historically rooted and provides an accurate picture of American English in the 1890s.

*Pink Marsh* comes to life as a series of conversations between Pink, a young black shoe-shiner, and his regular morning customer, an older, conventional white man who enjoys the frisson of the forbidden he gets from talking to the rougher black youth about various topics, including money, romance, war, politics, evolution, personal and national pride, clothing, and education. The stories generally demonstrate the superior wisdom of Pink's common sense expressed in plain speech compared to his customer's more refined intelligence. Furthermore, the stories often show Pink using humor and self-reflection to counteract the racism he faces. Despite the stereotypes in these stories offensive to present sensibilities, they were regarded as racially sensitive in their time.

*Doc' Horne* veers slightly from the format of *Artie* and *Pink Marsh*. The title character is an older gentleman living in the Alfalfa European Hotel. His fellow tenants include a dentist, an old drunk, a struggling actor, a drummer, a bookie, and a kid with a face full of freckles. More dramatic than Artie or Pink, Doc' creates an audience out of this motley crew, telling tall tales of his experiences traveling the United States as a government negotiator, an army engineer, a patent medicine salesman, a county recorder, and a wooer of women. Although the tales told by Doc' are increasingly hard for his listeners and the reader to believe, his story times create a sense of community for his fellow boarders, and the situation reflects the everyday experience of many young men living in boardinghouses as they tried to make their way in the city. *Doc' Horne* is more critical of city life than Ade's earlier stories, presenting it as packed with meaningless and unprofitable labor and relatively empty of human interaction. This critique became a central theme in Ade's fables.

## CRITICAL RECEPTION

Ade's name is little known to today's reader, and he is not a common subject of critical attention. Nonetheless, he was a prominent and beloved writer during his lifetime, and his work continues to have historical importance. Howells (1903), one of Ade's greatest promoters and supporters,

described Ade's work as fundamentally American rather than regional, saying that he addressed with great empathy and humor the two great endeavors of modern life: pairing up romantically and making enough money to support oneself and one's family. Jean Shepherd (1961), on the other hand, commented on the distinctly Midwestern quality of Ade's humor, linking him with the "peculiar air of the Midwest which has molded most of the American humorists from Twain to Thurber." Literary historian Franklin J. Meine (1963) called Ade a social historian, whose work was "illuminated by his sly Hoosier humor."

Remarking on the decline of Ade's prominence as a writer, Harold H. Kolb, Jr., (1971) attributed the author's waning popularity to the rapidly changing cultural landscape of the United States. The country so vividly depicted in Ade's works, Kolb observed, was no longer recognizable by the mid-twentieth century. Albert Ashforth (1987) agreed, suggesting that the sociology of America changed after World War I, dating Ade's sketches that emphasized rural life. Lowell Matson (1961-62) argued in favor of Ade's "solid contributions to American humor and literary styles" and contended that his achievements are lasting, but that they had been overlooked by scholars of the generation after him.

Many critics have focused on Ade's use of regional diction and grammar. Although these scholars typically concentrate on the author's fables and his "Stories of the Streets and of the Town" columns, R. F. Bauerle (1958; see Further Reading) showed that Ade's plays and later works also innovated a body of neologisms. As evidence, Bauerle's essay catalogs specific words and expressions coined by Ade in *Bang! Bang!* (1928), *The College Widow*, *Hand-Made Fables* (1920), *Knocking the Neighbors* (1912), *The Sultan of Sulu*, and *True Bills* (1904).

John J. Pauly (1992; see Further Reading) provided a late-twentieth-century perspective on Ade's writing, arguing that while most contemporary critics consider Ade's fables to be his best work, readers should not overlook the merit of his early journalism. These pieces, Pauly asserted, depict late-nineteenth-century Chicago as vital and compelling and illustrate the social deficits of urban living, particularly the inherent lack of community support so important to rural life. Guy Szuberla (1995) concurred with Pauly's assertion, identifying *Doc' Horne* as an example of a "residential" work, or one that emphasizes the value of social community. The Alfalfa European Hotel in *Doc' Horne*, Szuberla suggested, functions as such a community. Janet St. Clair (1988) declared Ade one of "Chicago's three foremost humorists at the close of the nineteenth century," along with Finley Peter Dunne and Eugene Field. She considered Ade to be distinguished among them for his emphasis on "rooted values, common sense, and an apparently natural propensity toward goodness and honesty."

Jenny Ludwig

## PRINCIPAL WORKS

- The Chicago Record's "Stories of the Streets and of the Town."* As Anonymous. Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1894. (Journalism)
- Second Series of the Chicago Record's "Stories of the Streets and of the Town."* As Anonymous. Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1894. (Journalism)
- Third Series of the Chicago Record's "Stories of the Streets and of the Town."* As Anonymous. Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1895. (Journalism)
- Fourth Series of the Chicago Record's "Stories of the Streets and of the Town."* As Anonymous. Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1895. (Journalism)
- Artie: A Story of the Streets and Town.* Chicago: Stone, 1896. (Novel)
- Circus Day.* Chicago: Werner, 1896. (Children's fiction)
- Stories from History.* As John Hazelden. Chicago: Werner, 1896. (Children's nonfiction)
- What a Man Sees Who Goes Away from Home.* Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1896. (Travel essays)
- Fifth Series of the Chicago Record's "Stories of the Streets and of the Town."* As Anonymous. Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1897. (Journalism)
- Pink Marsh: A Story of the Streets and Town.* Chicago: Stone, 1897. (Novel)
- Sixth Series of the Chicago Record's "Stories of the Streets and of the Town."* As Anonymous. Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1898. (Journalism)
- Doc' Horne: A Story of the Streets and Town.* Chicago: Stone, 1899. (Novel)
- Seventh Series of the Chicago Record's "Stories of the Streets and of the Town."* As Anonymous. Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1899. (Journalism)
- Eighth Series. The Chicago Record's Stories of the Streets and of the Town.* As Anonymous. Chicago: Chicago Daily News, 1900. (Journalism)
- Fables in Slang.* Chicago: Stone, 1900. (Fables)
- More Fables.* Chicago: Stone, 1900. (Fables)
- Forty Modern Fables.* New York: Russell, 1901. (Fables)
- Grouch at the Game; or, Why He Changed His Colors.* Chicago?: Miller and Mabbett, 1901. (Fable)
- The Sultan of Sulu: An Original Satire in Two Acts.* Studebaker Theatre, Chicago. 11 Mar. 1902. New York: Russell, 1903. (Play)
- The Girl Proposition: A Bunch of He and She Fables.* New York: Russell, 1902. (Fables)
- The County Chairman: A Comedy-Drama.* Studebaker Theatre, Chicago. 24 Nov. 1903. New York: French, 1924. (Play)
- In Babel: Stories of Chicago.* New York: McClure, Phillips, 1903. (Sketches)
- People You Know.* New York: Russell, 1903. (Fables)
- The College Widow: A Pictorial Comedy in Four Acts.* Garden Theatre, New York. 20 Sept. 1904. New York: French, 1924. (Play)
- Breaking into Society.* New York: Harper, 1904. (Fables)
- True Bills.* New York: Harper, 1904. (Fables)
- Just out of College: A Light Comedy in Three Acts.* Hyperion Theatre, New Haven. 25 Sept. 1905. New York: French, 1924. (Play)
- In Pastures New.* New York: McClure, Phillips, 1906. (Sketches)
- The Mayor and the Manicure: Play in One Act.* Proctor's Albany Theatre, Albany. 11 Nov. 1907. New York: French, 1923. (Play)
- The Slim Princess.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1907. (Journalism)
- Father and the Boys: A Comedy Drama.* Empire Theatre, New York. 2 Mar. 1908. New York: French, 1924. (Play)
- Verses and Jingles.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1911. (Poetry)
- Knocking the Neighbors.* Garden City: Doubleday, Page, 1912. (Journalism)
- Ade's Fables.* Garden City: Doubleday, Page, 1914. (Fables)
- Nettie: A Play in One Act.* Punch and Judy Theatre, New York. Mar. 1919. New York: French, 1923. (Play)
- Hand-Made Fables.* Garden City: Doubleday, Page, 1920. (Fables)
- Single Blessedness and Other Observations.* Garden City: Doubleday, Page, 1922. (Essays)
- Speaking to Father: Play in One Act.* New York: French, 1923. (Play)
- Bang! Bang!: A Collection of Stories Intended to Recall Memories of the Nickel Library Days When Boys Were Supermen and Murder a Fine Art.* New York: Sears, 1928. (Short stories)
- The Old-Time Saloon: Not Wet—Not Dry, Just History.* New York: Long and Smith, 1931. (Nonfiction)
- Stories of the Streets and of the Town.* Chicago: Caxton Club, 1941. (Journalism)



*The Permanent Ade.* Ed. Fred C. Kelly. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1947. (Fables, journalism, plays, and sketches)

*The America of George Ade (1866-1944): Fables, Short Stories, Essays.* Ed. Jean Shepherd. New York: Putnam, 1961. (Essays, fables, and short stories)

*Artie and Pink Marsh: Two Novels by George Ade.* Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1963. (Novels)

*Chicago Stories.* Ed. Franklin J. Meine. Chicago: Regnery, 1963. (Journalism)

*Letters of George Ade.* Ed. Terence Tobin. West Lafayette: Purdue U Studies, 1973. (Letters)

*The Best of George Ade.* Ed. A. L. Lazarus. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985. (Essays, fables, letters, plays, and sketches)

*Stories of Chicago.* Ed. Meine. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2003. (Journalism)

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## CRITICISM

### William Dean Howells (essay date 1903)

SOURCE: Howells, W[illiam]. D[ean]. "Certain of the Chicago School of Fiction." *North American Review* May 1903: 734-46. Print.

[In the following essay, Howells compares the work of three humor writers he assigns to "the Chicago school of fiction": Ade, Edith Wyatt, and Finley Peter Dunne. Howells describes Ade's work as fundamentally American, rather than simply regional, because it appeals to the "whole vast, droll American world" through its concern with finding love and getting married (as in the 1902 collection *The Girl Proposition*) and with financial matters.]

I like a large loose phrase such as I have set over this paper, because, if it bags here and there, or is too long in the sleeves, or hangs off in the back, it can be fitted to the figure, with a little use of the shears; but if a phrase is too tight to begin with, if the coat is cut strictly according to a scant pattern of cloth, nothing can be done to adapt it; and if the wearer insists upon keeping it on, from motives of economy or modesty, the effect is, even if pathetic, ridiculous. One may say there is no Chicago school of fiction, but this might be as wanting in truth as my phrase is possibly superabundant in it. A good deal depends upon what one means by school, and if I mean by the Chicago school much the same as I should mean by the Boston school of poetry in the time of the great five or six poets of twenty-five years ago, or the Knickerbocker school when Poe and his contemporaries were living in New York, or the San Francisco school when Mr. Clemens and Mr. Charles Warren Stoddard, and Bret Harte, and others were clinging to the perilous incline of the Pacific Slope, then I think I am

fairly justified in speaking of a Chicago school. Or if the reader wishes to be very fastidious, and denies to the notable group of Chicago writers, now doing rather more than their share of the best literary work in the country, the central unity which would constitute it a school, then I am willing to speak of the Mr. Henry B. Fuller school, the Mr. George Ade school, the Mr. F. P. Dunne school, the Mr. Will Payne school, the Mr. Robert Herrick school, and, by no manner of means least, though last, the Miss Edith Wyatt school. There are several other well-known writers of the same habitat, whom I might name a school for, if, with the perversity of strong convictions, I did not choose to ignore them because they are not realistic enough for my taste. I do not speak of the Mr. Hamlin Garland school, because he seems to me to belong farther West, though he has lived much of the time in Chicago; or of the Mr. Brand Whitlock school, because, though he received his training in journalism and political knowledge in Chicago, he now lives in Ohio; or of the Frank Norris school, because his young manhood was spent in California, though his birth and his formative years were Chicagoan. But I name all these admirable artists together, not only from a spirit of Mid-Western chauvinism, but in order to point the fact that there is no group in any other locality which will quite bear comparison with them. This should be enough to set readers in other sections against them, and to make my authors, each and all, wish that I had withheld such a damaging recognition of their excellence.

## I

The truth is, however, that I do not think I should be writing of them just now, if it were not for the pleasure, which I feel the need of expressing, lately given me by Miss Edith Wyatt's very delightful novel "True Love." If my pleasure is so great that it overflows in praise of her literary fellow-citizens, that may be regretted, but it cannot be helped; though it arises, I believe, from a charm in all her work which is peculiarly her own. This was something so exquisite in her first book, "Every One His Own Way," that the reader who felt it there, might well have trembled for the attempt to impart its delicate quality to a larger form than that of those sketches. But the author has made the attempt, and signally succeeded. Whatever amused the sense of humor, and took the fancy, and won the heart, in the friendly wit, the subtle playfulness, of the first book, is here no less in the second. The perfect sanity, the absolute wholesomeness, the fascinating common sense, are here the ground from which a flower of entire grace again springs fresh and fragrant. The author's work, so far, is the apotheosis of the democratic spirit; the material is what you please to call it. If you yourself have been so distinguished by your Maker as to have some essential difference from your fellow-creatures, you will think it very common; but if you are upon the whole not able to make out that you are better than most others, you will be disposed, as I am, to rejoice that the average of human nature is so apparently good, and kind, and beautiful as Miss Wyatt sees it. Not

that she sees it all of an equal amiability or loveliness. There are several figures in "True Love," as in "Every One His Own Way," who are otherwise, though they are recognized with an irony so light and compassionate as never to find it out. There is a prig in "True Love" whom one loathes, but he does not know it; and there are some fools whom one loves and honors, and two or three gloomy frumps whom one is glad to meet under the protection of their often humorous and always good-humored relatives, who mostly prevail. The story is not as sure of its own mind as the conventional story is; it is like one's own story in not being certain of the relative importance of its different persons and events. First, there is the love of the dull but beautiful Inez Marsh and the prig Norman Hubbard, which might better be called their self-love; and then there is the love of Emily Marsh, the agreeable, sensible, rather pretty and charming girl, who almost knows how funny her father and her brother Tom are, and Dick Colton, the young enterprising hotel-keeper of Centreville, who has got himself forward while helping other people in every direction, and who is as common as the earth, and as good. Strangely enough, the lovers and self-lovers have families about them, and do not exist in the splendid isolation of romantic lovers; they have fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and the like, and these are not treated as mere pieces of mechanism 'for transacting the lovers' passion, or inhumanly slighted as such characters are by most novelists, but are admirably studied and found extremely interesting. The two Marshes, fathers respectively of Inez and Emily, are such quaint, true, wise, amusing Americans as make one glad and proud of one's country; their wives who rule and obey them, but are never in the joke of them, are of a precious and wholly satisfied commonplaceness which only Miss Wyatt (now Jane Austen is no longer writing) can give the sense of.

Miss Wyatt shows her rare gift in nothing more than in the portraiture of two or three half-grown boys, alarmed for the respectability of their families; and she gives us almost as novel a pleasure in the psychology of a little flirt, who might have remained harmless, but whose final selfishness precipitates the tragedy of her sweet-hearted, silly young husband, and who finds herself lifted to the height where she feels she ought always to have been, when her priggish brother-in-law, though he at first cruelly snubbed her, feels her fascination, at another's suggestion, and marries her. I should have been ready to say Fanny Colton was the great triumph of the story, if I had not thought in time of Emily Marsh, whose sense and kindness and unselfishness are quite as convincingly painted. But, so far as I could note, there was no erring in the touch with which any of the figures are done; the aged and middle-aged figures are ascertained with as fine a fidelity as those ridiculous and adorable boys. The perfectly sincere, but utterly affected author of the great romantic novel, "Chillingsworth," Thirly Thompson, is the most delicious fool in fiction since Mr. Collins, but he is a fool you give your heart to.

For my own comfort, perhaps, if I had been very exacting, I might have chosen to have the course of "True Love" run to its prosperous close, without any very tragic incidents. But I am obliged to own that hotels do burn down, and fine fellows lose their money in real life, and that dreadful things happen to the light of head and heart as well as to natures of weightier substances. I feel that therefore I must not shrink from these things in fiction, though they are not of such every-day occurrence as theatre-party dinners at Madam Hubbard's in Chicago, or dances at the Colton House in Centreville, or drives on the River Road, which I much prefer. The author, indeed, offers me compensation in a thousand little humorous touches throughout the story, and sets before me the untragedied average of the tale with such magic that I seem, with my own commonness, to be part of it: I know the other people in it do not think themselves too good for me; they are too kind for that. What I like nearly as much as I like them, is their fearlessly realized entourage, in Centreville as well as in Chicago. After all, nature is not such a bad model, even the nature which has not been in print before, and it is this sort of nature which Miss Wyatt daringly delights in. Her landscape is no more literary than her people are, and the motives she likes best to divine would be entirely novel if the reader did not recognize them in himself. If I am to descend to such poor particulars as her style and method, I must say that they have the same effect of originality; but, perhaps, if I came to examine them very minutely I should find them merely the technique which we all use when we are simplest and clearest, and not thinking about how finely we shall say things. In this relation, I am almost ashamed to note the little break she has made in writing the New England, or, more specifically, the Boston accent. The natives of that city replace our nerve-racking Western letter *r* by a sort of aspirate, and never by the Dundreary *w*, which she seems to think they use.

It is the only false note in the book, and I might not have been aware of it if the art had not been otherwise so faultless. The spirit is always delightful, and of all our women writers, except Miss Jewett alone, Miss Wyatt seems most to have the precious quality which we desperately call "temperament," because we cannot think of the true word, or because there is none. These two writers, so several in their inspirations, are alike in the gentle humanity of their ideal, and together they go far to console an age which has no Jane Austen of its own. More than any others now living, they approach that divine creature in her supreme charm; and, if Miss Jewett is likest her in the delicate humor which consists with certain little patrician preferences, Miss Wyatt is likier still in the fine irony which plays with its victim and finally lets it go alive, and even insensible of the peril escaped.

Miss Wyatt's humor is a little richer, or, if not quite that, then fuller, because of its fresher and more varied sources; or if that is not quite a reasonable saying, then because of that democratic kindness, that instinct of equality which is

the sense of justice prevalent in everything she has done. This is the really valuable contribution of the West, and of that Chicago in which the West has come to its consciousness, toward that poor American condition of English literature which has long been trying so hard to be itself in the face of such sore temptations to be something else. The democracy which was the faith of New England became the life of the West, and now it is the Western voice in our literary art. Mr. Fuller, indeed, had to reason to his democracy through the misgiving inspired by the Beautiful in the lands of tradition and convention, and it is the chief wonder of his very extraordinary work that, after being a chevalier of vain thoughts, he should have become a fellow-citizen of such solid realities. If there were no Chicago novels but the "Cliff Dwellers" and "With the Procession," I should say there was a Chicago school of fiction. But when one can add to these Mr. Will Payne's "Money Captain," and that later story of his whose name, but not whose nature, escapes my decrepit memory, and the several novels of Mr. Robert Herrick, one feels safe against any adverse trial of one's conclusion. The peculiar Chicago note—I knew "note" would get in somewhere, it has been watching its chance from the beginning of this paper—is not less perceptible in the writer who came to Chicago full Boston-grown than in those to the manner born. The republic of letters is everywhere sufficiently republican; but in the metropolis of the Middle-West, it is so without thinking; it is so almost without feeling; and the atmospheric democracy, the ambient equality, is something that seems like the prime effect in literature of what America has been doing and saying in life ever since she first formulated herself in the Declaration.

## II

There is something a little militant, a little aggressive, which is in the end a little defensive also, in Miss Wyatt's fine mockeries of the prigs, who are so interestingly the Chicago analogues of the snobs of elder societies. But in Mr. George Ade the American spirit arrives: arrives, puts down its grip, looks around, takes a chair and makes itself at home. It has no questions to ask and none to answer. There it is, with its hat pushed back, its hands in its pockets, and at its outstretched feet that whole vast, droll American world, essentially alike in Maine and Oregon and all the hustling regions between: speaking one slang, living one life, meaning one thing.

It is, I think, Mr. Ade's instinct of our solidarity and the courage of his instinct which has enabled him to go straighter to the heart of our mystery than any former humorist. He has lost no time, he has made no false moves from the beginning, so far as one knows his beginning. I myself knew it in his "Artie," which I hailed, with what noise I could, as a masterpiece in a sort as new as it was captivating. In that very surprising study of the kind of common young American who is never commonplace, there was a touch as absolute as the material was novel. Both touch and

material were as authentic and genuine in "Pink Marsh," the portrait of a Chicago *post bellum* negro, as Western conditions have differenced him from the Southern and earlier type; and again, one felt the fresh air in one's face, and the untrodden ground under one's feet in approaching the group at the Alfalfa Hotel, with that masterly figure of "Doc Horne" to welcome one with his courteous and friendly lies. Of course, this is not saying the thing, not giving the sense of character which so richly abounds without slopping into caricature in these pictures of an unerringly ascertained average of American life. No cataloguing of the excellencies of these books would give a notion of their people so frankly, so boldly and yet so delicately defined, so unmistakably shown, so undeniably true.

The level struck is low: the level of the street, which seems not depressed in the basement barber-shop where Pink Marsh polishes shoes, or lifted in the office where Artie talks to his friend and evolves himself and his simple love-story. It is the same level in the entrance floor of the Alfalfa, where Doc Horne sits with his forfuitous companions and harmlessly romances. You are not asked to be interested in any one because he is any way out of the common, but because he is every way in the common. Mr. Ade would not think of explaining or apologizing or at all accounting for the company he invites you to keep. He knows too well how good it is, and he cheerfully takes the chance of your not yourself being better.

It is his wonderful directness which is in case here, his perfect control in dealing with the American as the American knows himself. He does not prepare his specimens, or arrange a point of view for you. There the characters are, as they have walked in out of the sun, and they could not imagine your not being pleased to meet them. But you will make a great mistake if you fancy they are without refinement of their own, their point of honor. Artie is essentially as fine as he is frank. In the best things of a gentleman he is a gentleman. He is a fountain of slang, but his thought is as pure as any that flows from wells of English undefiled. Doc Horne is a lovable type of the older fashioned American with the elderly ideals of politeness, of chivalry, of personal dignity, which I do not believe even race suicide can obliterate in our nation, and his fellow-lodgers at the Alfalfa are worthy of his suave and gentle society: the Lightning Dentist, whose life amidst the extraction of thousands of teeth, is a dream of happy marriage; even the Book-Agent who is in lurking at the Alfalfa, pending his dream of happy divorce; even the poor Lush who in his cups first outrages and then cherishes the Doc; even the insufferable Freckled Boy, even the wretched Hustler who swindles Doc Horne into a guiltless complicity in his swindling scheme. But what dreadful things am I saying? That these frail fellow-mortals are of the great American family in which we are all one. Pink Marsh is the colored brother in this family, and I love him like the rest.