

Dictionary of Literary Biography

Volume 12:

**American Realists
and Naturalists**

Dictionary of Literary Biography • Volume Twelve

American Realists and Naturalists

Edited by Donald Pizer
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and
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Foreword

The closely related American literary movements known as realism and naturalism are conventionally placed between the close of the Civil War and the beginning of World War I. The historiography of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American literature differs in this respect from that of both England and France. The terms realism and naturalism are seldom used in accounts of English literature of this period. Instead, Victorianism and Edwardianism (and occasionally such more specialized terms as decadence and aestheticism) serve as historical markers. And though French literary historians do rely on realism and naturalism to designate specific phases of French literary expression, they place these phases much earlier in the nineteenth century, with naturalism reaching its climax in the late 1870s with Zola's most significant work.

These differences in terminology and chronology have suggestive implications for the origin and nature of realism and naturalism in America. The placing of the movements between the two wars reveals the importance of these traumatic moments in the history of American life and thought. The Civil War, with its central metaphor of brother killing brother (as in one of Ambrose Bierce's most memorable stories), brought to an end not only transcendental idealism but also the very notion of a patrician society with deep roots in family, land, and education. Somewhat as in early eighteenth-century England, there arose as a dominant force in postbellum America a largely commercial and urban middle class with interests in literature which could best be met by the normative, commonplace, pragmatic world of the realistic novel—by the novels, in short, of William Dean Howells during the 1870s and 1880s. American realism in Howells's conception and practice of fiction moved during these decades toward Rene Wellek's definition of realism as "the objective representation of contemporary social reality." The movement achieved its annus mirabilis in 1885, when Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Howells's *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, and Henry James's *The Bostonians* appeared in American magazines. These works sought to render Ameri-

can life in "the light of common day," to use Edwin Cady's phrase for the writer's effort to express a vision of life which most men share. And they did so with a combination of autobiographical and comic threads and an objective, scenic method (a detached author revealing theme through action) which also characterizes the movement at its best.

To stress the Civil War as a turning point in the American consciousness, however, is to obscure, as Robert Falk has pointed out, that American realism is also a form of Victorianism. The Civil War did not destroy the American writer's penchant for moral idealism, melodrama, and sentiment; it only drove these characteristics of high Victorianism into more mixed forms and more indirect expression. Victorianism flourished within realism most openly in the highly popular local-color movement which dominated the American short story for over thirty years. From Bret Harte in the 1860s to Hamlin Garland in the 1890s, this form of fiction often combined a preoccupation with verisimilitude of local detail (the writer's homage to what Alfred Kazin has called the American absorption in "the material surface of things") and powerful currents of ethical idealism, sentimentality, and melodramatic plotting. In the work of the major realists, moral idealism is expressed more obliquely but is still a characteristic of their fiction. A Huck Finn or a Silas Lapham or an Isabel Archer possesses a "good heart" which is capable of defeating or at least withstanding the evil forces of life.

World War I and its aftermath were, of course, to cast considerable doubt on this faith in man's innate ethical nature as well to mark the beginning of American modernism, a literary movement in which an elitist high art often joins with a deeply jaundiced view of the human condition. As Hemingway noted in a famous passage in *A Farewell to Arms*, after the inhuman carnage of modern battle the traditional language of moral idealism rings obscene. But to view World War I as the abrupt conclusion of a literary period is as misleading as to view the Civil War as its abrupt beginning. Just as Victorianism did not die at Appomattox, so American modernism has its roots in a group of young turn-of-the-century writers (most of whom were

born in the early 1870s) who helped create the modern temper in America. Labeled even in their own time as naturalists, these writers have often been overidentified with Emile Zola's more extreme pronouncements on the function and nature of the naturalistic or "experimental" novel, a novel in which character is depicted as conditioned and determined by heredity and environment. In fact, aside from the early fiction of Frank Norris and Jack London, the work of this generation of American writers is seldom so simplistically doctrinaire. Other than a frequently shared desire to depict the sensationalistic underside of urban life, these writers had widely ranging interests. From Henry Adams's and Theodore Dreiser's accounts of the failure of the American Dream to Edith Wharton's and Kate Chopin's brave attempts to deal honestly with the fate of being a woman in America to Stephen Crane's ironic deflation of most human pretensions to wisdom and strength, they sought to respond to American life with a richness and fullness appropriate to the disparate yet increasingly confining and destructive American world they saw around them. Though they seldom revealed their characters as triumphing in any expression of heroism, love, or even common integrity, these writers nevertheless still rendered experience with a sense of its tragic pathos which is an oblique reflection of traditional humanistic faith.

There were thus no "pure" realists or naturalists in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American writing. American literary expression of the period was too diffuse in its origins and in general too instinctively unideological in its

fundamental impulses to adhere to specific theories of literature. But there were two distinctive generations of writers, with the writers of each generation sharing a broadly similar set of assumptions about literature. The biographies and critical commentaries of this volume represent a collective effort to describe these assumptions as they appear in the life and art of the principal figures of a major phase of American literature.

It might be helpful to provide some comments on the principles of selection which have guided Professor Harbert and myself in our choices of which writers to include in this volume. We have sought to include every significant writer of fiction who flourished between the wars and whose work exhibits characteristics which can be designated realistic or naturalistic. On the one hand, this principle has resulted in the omission of figures who wrote exclusively in poetry or nonfictional prose, such as Walt Whitman or William James, despite their frequent presence in historical surveys of the period. On the other, it has resulted in the inclusion of such writers of fiction as Ambrose Bierce, Edward Bellamy, and Richard Harding Davis whose work is only marginally realistic or naturalistic. In short, because our emphasis has been on fiction, we have sought to be as inclusive as possible in this area. We have also omitted several novelists who, though published between 1865 and 1914, are usually viewed principally as antebellum or post-World War I writers. Thus, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Willa Cather are not in this volume, though their biographies and those of similar figures can be found in other volumes in this series.

—Donald Pizer

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Dictionary of Literary Biography • Volume Twelve

American Realists and Naturalists

Dictionary of Literary Biography

Henry Adams

Earl N. Harbert
Northeastern University

BIRTH: Boston, Massachusetts, 16 February 1838, to Charles Francis and Abigail Brooks Adams.

EDUCATION: A.B., Harvard University, 1858.

MARRIAGE: 29 June 1872 to Marian Hooper.

AWARDS AND HONORS: Loubat Prize for *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*, 1894; elected president of the American Historical Association, 1894; Pulitzer Prize for *The Education of Henry Adams*, 1919.

DEATH: Washington, D.C., 27 March 1918.

SELECTED BOOKS: *Chapters of Erie, and Other Essays*, by Adams and Charles F. Adams, Jr. (Boston: Osgood, 1871);

The Life of Albert Gallatin (Philadelphia & London: Lippincott, 1879);

Democracy: An American Novel, anonymous (New York: Holt, 1880; London: Macmillan, 1882);

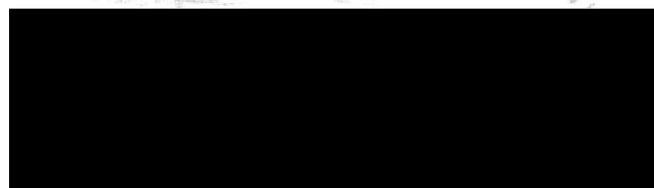
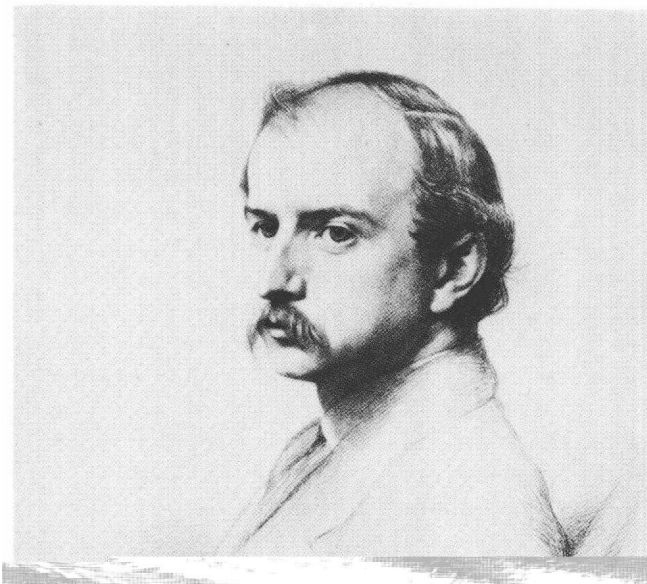
John Randolph (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1882; revised, 1883);

Esther: A Novel, as Frances Snow Compton (New York: Holt, 1884; London: Bentley, 1885);

History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison:

History of the United States of America During the First Administration of Thomas Jefferson (Cambridge, Mass.: Privately printed, 1884; revised edi-

tion, 2 volumes, New York: Scribners, 1889); *History of the United States of America During the Second Administration of Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge, Mass.: Privately printed, 1885; revised edition, 2 volumes, New York: Scribners, 1890);



Henry Adams

- History of the United States of America During the First Administration of James Madison* (Cambridge, Mass.: Privately printed, 1888; revised edition, 2 volumes, New York: Scribners, 1890);
- History of the United States of America During the Second Administration of James Madison*, 3 volumes (New York: Scribners, 1891);
- Historical Essays* (New York: Scribners, 1891; London: Unwin, 1891);
- Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres*, anonymous (Washington, D.C.: Privately printed, 1904; revised and enlarged, 1912; Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1913; London: Constable, 1914);
- The Education of Henry Adams* (Washington, D. C.: Privately printed, 1907; Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1918; London: Constable, 1919);
- A Letter to American Teachers of History* (Washington, D. C.: Privately printed, 1910);
- The Life of George Cabot Lodge* (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1911);
- The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma* (New York & London: Macmillan, 1919).

Henry Adams owes his popular reputation to a single work, *The Education of Henry Adams*. That book, which was privately printed in 1907 but not commercially published until just after the author's death in 1918, quickly made Adams famous, as he was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize for it in 1919. At the same time, the sudden notoriety of this one book put into critical eclipse the substantial literary work that Adams had accomplished earlier: essays, biographies, novels, letters, and especially a magisterial nine-volume historical study of the presidencies of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison—a classic of American historiography. In the years since 1919, some of that shadow has disappeared, and a larger, fairer-minded sense of Henry Adams's proper place in the cultural history of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has gradually emerged. With the passage of time, we have come to see that Adams stands apart even while he belongs to his age; as an artist and a man, he must be understood on his own terms, as a thoroughly independent participant and observer, yet in and of his time, and even perhaps as a unique American who contributed in a special way to the richness of American intellectual life. Finally, no label like that of *realist* can possibly do full justice to Henry Adams.

In a seemingly simple anecdote, *The Education of Henry Adams* proposes to teach its readers the

primary lesson of its author's birth and life: "The Irish gardener once said to the child: 'You'll be thinkin' you'll be President too!' The casualty of the remark made so strong an impression on his mind that he never forgot it. He could not remember ever to have thought on the subject; to him, that there should be a doubt of his being President was a new idea. What had been would continue to be. He doubted neither about Presidents nor about Churches, and no one suggested at that time a doubt whether a system of society which had lasted since Adam would outlast one Adams more."

The truth is that Henry Adams never quite outgrew "thinkin' you'll be President too!" Almost all of his life and nearly everything he wrote showed signs of a powerful family influence, the results of his fourth-generation membership in the Adams clan, that most remarkable of American political families, which had provided two presidents, John Adams and John Quincy Adams, and a minister to the court of St. James, Charles Francis Adams, before Henry Adams's own generation reached maturity.

At his birth in 1838, Henry Brooks Adams entered the special world of the Massachusetts Adamses, as the third son of Abigail Brooks Adams and Charles Francis Adams, the grandson of John Quincy Adams, and the great-grandson of John Adams. It was hardly an inauspicious beginning. All three illustrious forebears exemplified the principle of duty before pleasure, especially political duty to their state and nation. But, as their heir soon learned, the Adamses were also habitually committed to the equally demanding role of lifelong authorship—to being writers as much as politicians and statesmen. From their collective efforts has emerged the remarkable four-generation collection of diaries, documents, and letters that is known as the Adams Papers. Along with a political name, Henry inherited a duty to celebrate, explain, defend, and often to justify in simple words the complex experiences that were his life.

The earliest surviving evidence of Henry's attempt to satisfy this family demand for authorship dates from his years as an undergraduate student at Harvard College, 1854-1858. His essays on such subjects as the reading habits of his fellow students were printed in the *Harvard Magazine*, and they helped to establish for Adams a college popularity that led to his election as class orator for 1858. After graduation and the usual grand tour of Europe, he took up residence in Berlin, to begin the study of civil law and of the German language. In 1859 and 1860, Adams moved around Europe, touring in



Henry Adams, circa 1875

northern Italy with his sister, Louisa Adams Kuhn, and later taking advantage of an unusual opportunity to interview Garibaldi, the most popular revolutionary figure of the moment. Based on these experiences, Adams wrote colorful travel letters that were published in the *Boston Daily Courier*, thus marking his initiation into the adult world of newspaper journalism.

Returning to Massachusetts in 1860, Adams was soon recalled to family duty. He packed up and moved to Washington, where he served a double function: private secretary to his father, now Congressman Charles Francis Adams, and Washington correspondent for the *Boston Daily Advertiser*. Once settled in the capital Henry Adams found that the combination of activities seemed to satisfy both the political and literary demands of his complex nature, and certainly he took to Washington with enthusiasm. In fact, Adams never recovered from Potomac fever, as the city played an important role in most of the remainder of his long life. In 1861, however, when President Lincoln appointed Charles Francis Adams to be minister to the Court of St. James, Henry Adams transferred his residence to London, where he continued to serve as his father's secretary. There he remained, a remote although especially well-informed spectator,

throughout the American Civil War and until 1868. Again, the effects of place and time were lasting, as Adams never quite got over feeling that he had missed participating in the single most significant historic event of his lifetime. Yet, during these years, the young private secretary made good literary use of his time. He served perhaps the most important part of his apprenticeship, learning to shape his own thoughts on politics, history, and science into the essay form. Adams's most ambitious pieces appeared in the prestigious *North American Review*: "Captaine John Smith" (1867) and an extended essay-review (1868) of Sir Charles Lyell's tenth edition of *Principles of Geology*, a key text in evolutionary theory. Returning to Washington after the Civil War, Adams continued his career as an essayist, writing now in a more popular style a series of political studies aimed at practical reform. These essays began appearing in periodicals during 1869-1870 and were later collected in *Chapters of Erie*, along with similar efforts written by Henry's brother, Charles Francis Adams, Jr. Both of the fourth-generation sons were at this moment dedicated to the task of shaping a practical force of public opinion, one sufficiently powerful to effect reform in American political life.

Soon disillusioned by a failure to achieve any real results and with strong encouragement from his family, Henry Adams moved back to Boston and Harvard in 1870, to become both an instructor of history at Harvard College and editor of the *North American Review*. His marriage on 29 June 1872 to Marian ("Clover") Hooper, a young lady he had met first in London and a member of proper Boston society, led next to a lengthy wedding journey to England, continental Europe, and Egypt. The newlyweds carried with them written introductions to political and intellectual leaders in the countries they would visit, and some of the resulting friendships lasted throughout their lives. Back at Harvard, Adams took up his work with new seriousness, as he taught courses in medieval and American history, introduced within the university the first graduate seminars organized on the German model, in which a professor led a small group of students in an investigation of primary sources, and published the historical writings of his best graduate students along with some of his own in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law* (1876). Adams's chief contribution, the essay "The Anglo-Saxon Courts of Law," stands as an impressive demonstration that the academic had mastered traditional techniques for scholarly research and publication. In December 1876, Adams gave further evidence of his

versatility, as he presented a carefully prepared paper on "The Primitive Rights of Women" to a popular audience at the Lowell Institute. This talk argued for a greater appreciation of the legal and political importance of women in earlier times, and marked a path of investigation that would lead Adams to some of the most significant conclusions in his later writing.

Impressive fruits of his serious work in American history began to appear under the title *Documents Relating to New England Federalism, 1800-1815* (1877), a volume which he edited. Adams made this volume a spirited defense of his grandfather John Quincy Adams against the old attacks from Federalist party loyalists.

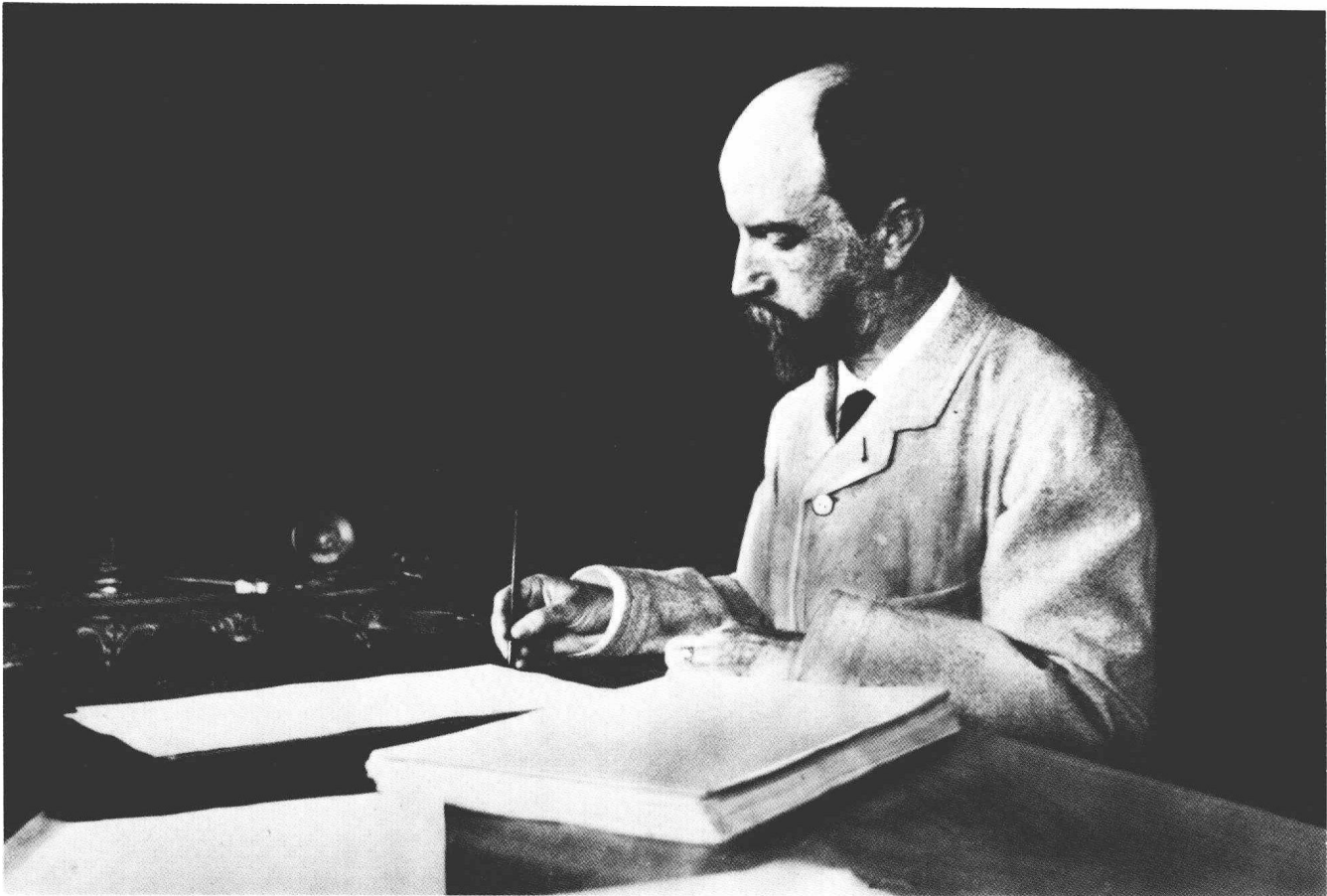
Adams resigned his appointment at Harvard during 1877 and once again moved to Washington, where he began to sort through the private papers of Albert Gallatin, secretary of the treasury in the Cabinet of President Thomas Jefferson. Adams's hard work soon made itself known to the public. In 1879 both *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*, edited by Adams, and *The Life of Albert Gallatin*, a biography by Adams, were published. During the first of these years in Washington, Adams joined a small circle of Washingtonians with whom he was to have permanent friendships: then assistant Secretary of State John Hay and his wife, Clara; Sen. James Donald (Don) Cameron and his wife, Elizabeth; Secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz; and Clarence King of the U. S. Geological Survey. More important for the moment, however, was the fact that his work on Gallatin announced a sense of high purpose in Adams's literary career.

In substance *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*—an edition commissioned by Gallatin family heirs, along with the biography of their kinsman—was a collection of private materials made available to scholars and to the general public for the first time. As editor of these papers, Adams learned something new about using source materials in an attractive and historically meaningful way. This ability he would convincingly demonstrate with even greater skill in the years ahead. At the time he took on the burden of editing Gallatin, however, his technique and editorial style still owed much to the hours he had spent laboring alongside his father, helping Charles Francis Adams put into print his massive editions of the writings of both John and John Quincy Adams. *The Life of Albert Gallatin* also shows something of an antique flavor, as if it were the work of a much older man. This quality, reviewers of the biography, including his brother Charles Adams, noted immediately. The profuse quotations from

Gallatin's writings did not mix easily with the narrative portions. Yet, even if it was from first appearance regarded as something less than an artistic success, *The Life of Albert Gallatin* remains a sound scholarly job, a biography that offers the portrait of Gallatin as an ideal statesman for his time, a man who might have been a worthy successor to Jefferson as president except for the uncontrollable historical accident of foreign birth. Over time, Adams's biography required little correction; the book held its place as the standard treatment of Albert Gallatin until the middle of the twentieth century.

After finishing the biography of Gallatin, Adams felt confident enough to extend his range and to begin a more ambitious historical study, which would gradually take shape and finally be made available to the general public during the years 1889-1891, as the *History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*. This nine-volume work mixes social, diplomatic, and intellectual history of the period 1800-1817 in an impressive way. It was unparalleled in Adams's day and still represents one of the most significant achievements in his entire literary career. The *History of the United States* is, in fact, one of the true classics in American historical writing. Adams's research for the book was extensive, especially in the archives of England, France, Spain, and America. In many cases Adams brought into public view for the first time archival materials that he had been able to see and use only because he was an Adams and the great-grandson and grandson of American presidents. Once he had gained access to these papers, the historian worked with copyists, translators, and personal secretaries to compile a massive documentary foundation, one that could support a deep yet broad reconsideration of a crucial period in the development of his nation. A scientific inquiry, the *History of the United States* came to represent in Adams's mind an act of patriotic duty.

While he was at work on the *History of the United States* Adams also found time to use writing as a pleasurable diversion for Marian Adams and himself when he turned his attention to critical biography and fiction. His vitriolic attack on Southern politician John Randolph of Roanoke, Virginia (1773-1833), in the short biography, *John Randolph* (1882), remains interesting, colorful reading. It was highly seasoned by the author's clear dislike for his subject—an opposite feeling from the one he had entertained for Gallatin—and the result was an enduring picture of an unattractive, enigmatic man, one that demanded response from Randolph's

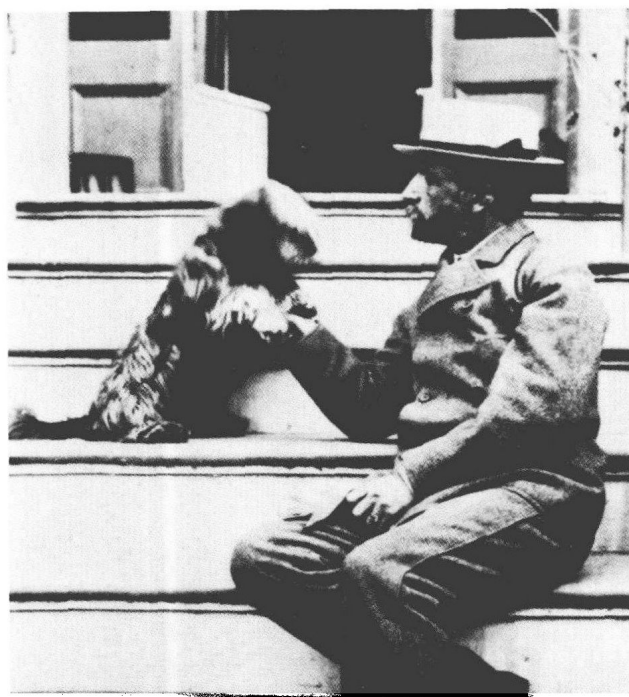


Adams in his study, circa 1883, at work on the *History of the United States During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison*. Photograph by Marian Adams.

more sympathetic biographers. In this book, Adams was trying out a biographical style quite different from the one he had used in *The Life of Albert Gallatin*. He drew upon new materials to fashion a savage critique in *John Randolph*, one that would later be incorporated in a larger and more significant historical work, the *History of the United States*, as would much of the material in his biography of Gallatin. In *John Randolph* Adams proved that he was learning more about the difficult art of biography. Meanwhile, striking off in another direction, Adams also added to his artistic skills by writing, more for fun than financial gain, his two novels: *Democracy: An American Novel* (1880) and *Esther: A Novel* (1884). Neither of these fictional works displayed its author's real name; instead Adams published the first anonymously and the second pseudonymously, seeking to protect his reputation as a serious historian and man of letters, at least until the appearance of the *History of the United States*, on which his real literary hopes were staked.

Of the two novels—all that Henry Adams ever

wrote—*Democracy* has enjoyed the greater reputation. Set in post-Civil War Washington, the book stands as an extension into fiction of its author's persistent interest in political reform, the same interest that had generated the essays in *Chapters of Erie* but equally, a moralistic impulse that could find no easy outlet in the more objective *History of the United States*. As the first of many novels set in the nation's capital, *Democracy* treats the chief questions of political power with a skeptical realism that broke with the prevailing myths of sentimental patriotism. The chief characters, like their real-life counterparts, people whom Adams knew in Washington, play out the moral and ethical dramas of personal and national right and wrong, set against a backdrop of political turmoil and reconciliation in the period of Reconstruction just after the Civil War. As the lessons of politics and life are taught to the heroine, Madeleine Lee, they are also made available to the reader. Senator Ratcliffe, the political villain from the American West, and Carrington, the noble but impecunious Southerner who was



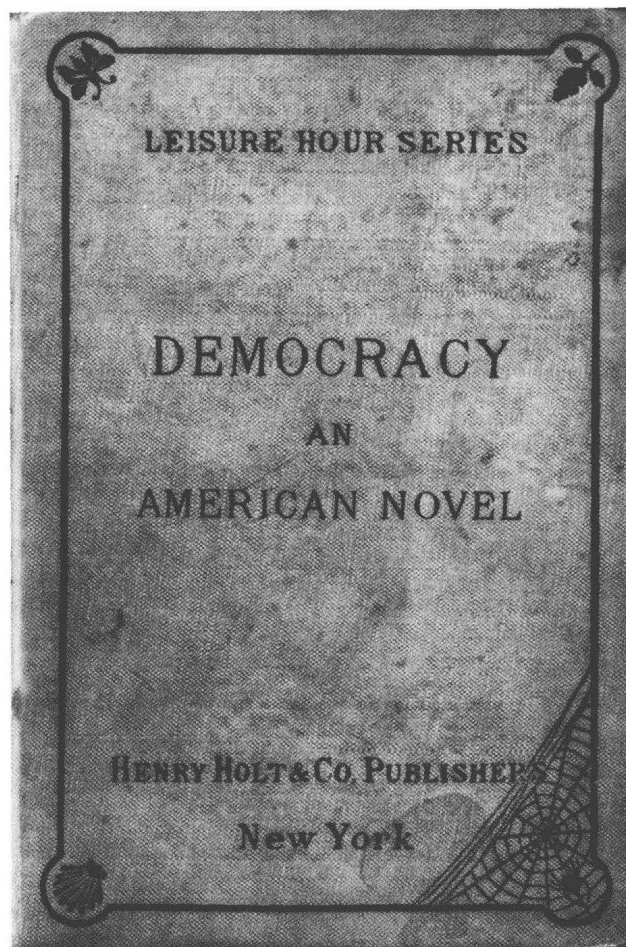
Henry Adams in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts, summer 1884.
Photograph by Marian Adams.

once a Confederate soldier but never a secessionist, engage in a romantic contest not only for the hand of the widowed Mrs. Lee, an attractive and intelligent woman who has come to Washington to learn political and human truths at first hand, but by implication, for control of her nation's future. Adams uses the male suitors to illustrate the dangers yet inherent in geographical sectionalism (so recently tested in the Civil War) and human imperfection. All promises of a rosy, virtuous future—national and personal—demand some further test. In the end, Mrs. Lee (along with author Adams) recoils at what she does find—pragmatism instead of patriotic idealism and personal corruption in the men (and perhaps the women) who seem to determine our national destiny. Confronted by a virtuous woman, Ratcliffe remains unreformed, although not untouched by the feminine principles she represents. For although she finds herself not immune to temptations of power and sexual attraction, Madeleine concedes no part of her moral code in action. Despite the promptings of ambition, she will not accept expediency as an adequate motive for an alliance with Ratcliffe. Yet he will never renounce American politics as usual, with its increments of graft and corruption and its overwhelmingly seductive invitation to POWER (as Adams insisted it be printed). In Adams's view, no idealistic

solution to the problems inherent in democracy was as yet possible. Many critics seemed to deny that he had done more than dress American government in romantic attire to make a clever novel, but a large reading public in England and America believed that the author had taken them behind the scenes to show what really went on in the corridors of power.

Perhaps to forestall the journalistic speculations concerning the authorship of the anonymously published *Democracy*, Adams chose to sign *Esther* with the pseudonym Frances Snow Compton. He never again used a pseudonym, although he continued to hide his authorship of various works throughout the remaining years of his life. *Esther* is another "problem" novel, but one that focuses on religion rather than politics. The chief male characters surround Esther Dudley (who owes her name and Puritan origins to Hawthorne's character in the short story "Old Esther Dudley"), trying their best to help the heroine find a usable personal philosophy that will get her through life. She searches for a set of modern—scientifically, aesthetically, and religiously—up-to-date ideas that will provide answers to her shrewdly posed, but often old-fashioned, questions about human experience. She studies, or more often talks about, geology, art, and theology, expecting that each in turn might supply just that degree of truth and certainty that seems required for her own life. Esther's need is sympathetically defined: she desperately wishes to function as a forceful, effective person in a post-Darwinian world. To her, in her dilemma as a woman, Adams brings what aid he can see around him, most obviously from a conventional tradition of romantic love, but more substantially from the worlds of art (represented by Wharton), science (George Strong), and religion (Stephen Hazard). None of these proves adequate for Esther's adjustment to life. Adams would later describe this plight as an "impasse" and recognize its lack of popular appeal as an ending for a novel. The practical effect for *Esther* was extremely poor sales, and the novel also failed to attract the attention of important critics.

Esther's own solution (final in the book) is to flee from the complications of her dilemma—a possibility that would later prove congenial to the real-life creator of this fiction, who put much of his thinking about his own experience into the novel. For even though he claimed with some justice in later years that the heroines of *Esther* and, to a lesser extent, *Democracy* owed their best qualities to his high-spirited wife, Marian Adams, it is equally clear that both characters are somewhat autobiographi-

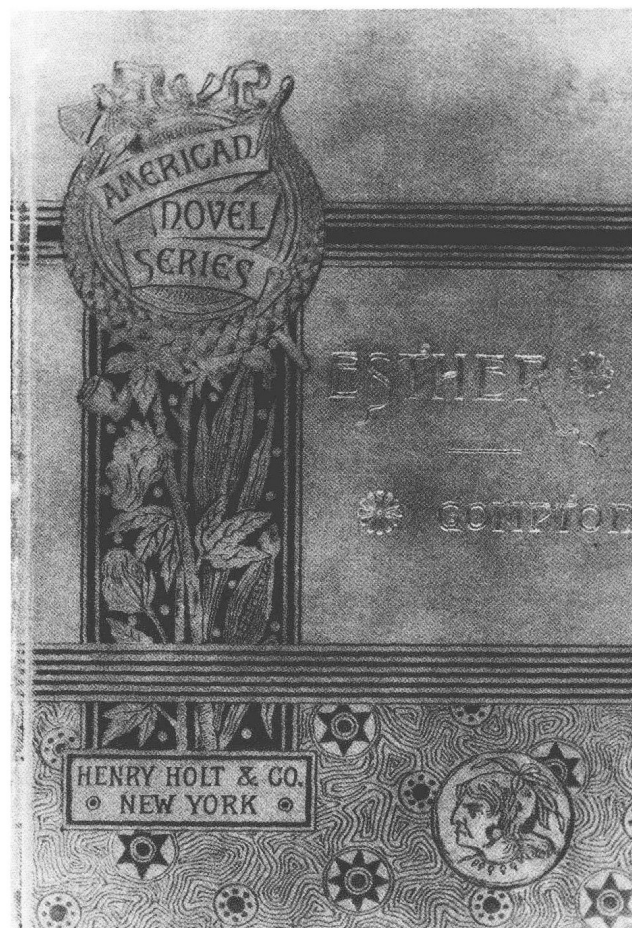


Front cover for Adams's anonymous first novel, an examination of Washington politics during the Hayes administration

cal. Yet, as he developed the most feminine traits of his heroines, Henry Adams knew that he was using his fiction to compliment his wife and to repay the interest she had displayed in his writing. Because of its great reliance on abstract discussion, *Esther* lacks the appeal that *Democracy* has as an insider's guide to real politics. Yet, in both novels Adams was testing the first rough outlines of his theory of feminine force, the hypothesis that would later be developed more fully in *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* and *The Education of Henry Adams*, where he would derive from his study of women in ancient and modern times the theory that women have served both as a standard for moral behavior and, historically, as a source of power. In another way, the novels signaled a new freedom in Adams's thought and work. He showed that he could write without the discipline of historical scholarship and avoid the traditional family demands for serious nonfiction and moral purpose. Just as he had moved his home from

puritanical, duty-bound Boston, Adams also had transferred his mind to the more worldly, less serious points beyond. For him, there would be no turning back.

Aside from writing during the 1880s Adams spent much time with his wife and their closest friends, the Hays, planning for the elegant new house the two families would occupy, just across Lafayette Park from the White House. Their lives seemed the best that financial security and select Washington society could offer. But before the *History of the United States* was finished or the new house constructed, Henry Adams's life was shattered by the suicide of his wife in 1885. From this blow, he never could recover fully. Yet, at that time, Adams seemed to continue in the normal patterns of his married life, moving into the new house on H Street, spending hours with the Hays and Camerons, finishing the writing of his history, and traveling when he found opportunity and good companionship available to him. As a memorial to Mar-



Front cover for Adams's pseudonymous second novel. The heroine closely resembles the author's wife, Marian.