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UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE

KENTUCKY AUTOBIOGRAPHY
AND KENTUCKY CULTURE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

Of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Of Master of Arts

Department of English

By

William F. Keirce

1948

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TITLE OF THESIS: **KENTUCKY AUTOBIOGRAPHY**
AND KENTUCKY CULTURE

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DATE: August 1, 1948

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to trace the historical development of autobiographical writing in Kentucky; to analyze the literary and philosophical characteristics of these works and, by this means, to divide these writings into several categories; and, finally, to reveal by an interpretation of these autobiographies, certain cultural aspects of Kentucky life and society. As thus stated, the intentions of this study are several; but, actually, all these aims are inseparably related parts of a single general problem which is to investigate Kentucky autobiographical writing as a whole in order to better understand the individual works in that literature.

Before turning to a discussion of specific works of autobiography, it is desirable to mention briefly certain factors which are general modifiers of this study.

It has been mentioned that this survey will be devoted, in part, to an interpretation of Kentucky autobiography as an index of cultural history. The method to be followed herein is suggested by Vernon L. Parrington's Main Currents in American Thought,¹ which is a prominent example of this technique as applied to the history of American Literature. In applying the principles of cultural history to Kentucky autobiography, however, certain limitations are encountered which restrict the validity and hence the usefulness of this method; therefore, the

1. Parrington, Vernon L., Main Currents in American Thought, New York, Harcourt Brace and Co., 1930.

frequency and scope of the generalization will be limited and the possibility of differing interpretations will be frequently admitted. The reason for this qualification is easily explained. The method of cultural history is to consider a related series of literary works or other art products in relation to general social influences such as economics, political forms, means of production, education and religion. These, or other social determinants, assert themselves in the art product, often without the author's awareness of their influence. The value of this method is obvious; by studying a literary work with reference to the culture in which it was produced, one may transcend the viewpoint of the author, understand his writing perhaps better than he did himself, and perceive relationships between his work and that of other writers. The method is reversible. The art product itself may be regarded as a cultural indicator and used as a key to many conditions of the society in which it was produced.

The application to the problem of this thesis of the procedures described above must be undertaken with many reservations. Autobiography, because it is only a single strain of Kentucky literature, is insufficient by itself to provide a complete picture of the cultural history of this state; and, therefore, to avoid arbitrary conclusions, the interpretation will be frequently limited in time and place, and the possibility of an alternative explanation not excluded. Another difficulty occurs when, conversely, an attempt is made to explain Kentucky autobiography itself, in terms of the cultural history of the state. The limitations

in the amount of readily available material on many phases of Kentucky history, and particularly, the lack of high grade, scientifically grounded research materials of an interpretative nature by recognized scholars has in turn limited the scope of the generalizations which can be reasonably established in this thesis. While the availability of thorough scholarly material dealing specifically with Kentucky history and culture leaves much to be desired, this inadequacy may be partially remedied by reference to more general cultural studies which, although written without specific application to this locality, illustrate principles of analysis which may be applied to Kentucky culture. Examples are such works as Professor Ruth Benedict's Patterns of Culture,¹ Professor W. J. Cash's The Mind of the South,² and Thorstein Veblen's The Theory of the Leisure Class.³

A word should be said about the value of autobiography in a study of this kind. Autobiography as a literary form has certain qualities which make it useful as a medium for historical research. There is, in the first place, a tendency toward realism and accuracy, which grows out of the direct relationship in experience that exists between the man and the event which he describes. Where there is a deviation from careful accuracy it is as likely to be a case of understatement as one of exaggeration. Even where the writer is a romanticist, the reader is seldom misled, if only for the reason that in autobiography some factual basis for the work must unavoidably be presented, a condition giving the narrative an inherent control which a historical novel may evade. A second quality of

-
1. Penguin Books, New York, 1946.
 2. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1941.
 3. Modern Library, New York, 1934.

autobiography making for realism and historical value is its close relationship in time to the events described. If the autobiography is in the form of a diary, journal, or letters, or if it is rewritten from any of these, the experience is apt to be recorded with the freshness, spontaneity, and realism of direct observation. Even if an autobiography is written by a man near the end of his life simply from his recollections, the description is still roughly contemporaneous with the experience and tends to preserve a sharpness which may be lost by a historian trying to recreate the event after a considerable lapse of time. In addition to these things autobiography is a hearty literary strain and appears to flourish, at least in American literature, long before social conditions become sufficiently congenial for the more formal literary types. It is not coincidental that the first works of literature produced by the American colonists were a journal¹ kept by Captain John Smith at Jamestown in 1607 and William Bradford's History of Plymouth Plantation² begun about a decade later. And inseparable from this last condition is the fact that autobiography is the literary vehicle of the common man. No other form offers fewer inhibitions of style or appropriateness to the prospective author. To have lived is about the only prerequisite to the production of an autobiography. An examination of just the works discussed in this thesis with a view to their origins is sufficient to verify the great variety of autobiographical writers and

1. Smith, Captain John, The General History of Virginia, Works, Ed., Edward Arber, London, 1884.

2. Bradford, William, History of Plymouth Plantation, publisher unknown, 1856.

to suggest the immensely greater richness of American autobiography generally.

Consideration is also due to certain disadvantages of autobiography. If this literary form is the great medium of expression for the common man it is also the great catchbasin for the commonplace. The deficiencies of autobiographical writing, as compared with other writing, are most severely felt in terms of the intellectual, the aesthetic, or the artistic, qualities which, at least in Kentucky autobiography, are virtually nonexistent. And, unfortunately, as the intellectual and aesthetic values of the subject decrease, the possibilities for criticism and interpretation likewise diminish. This analysis does not mean that it is unusual to find an interesting Kentucky autobiography if that word is taken to mean the simple fascination aroused by the novel, the horrible, and the incredible; but it does mean that an autobiography with any artistic power, one that is capable of producing a new experience for the reader, is rare indeed.

Some parallels may be drawn between Kentucky autobiography and early Egyptian art. Both are characterized by an absence of light or shade, by a neglect of drama or climax. Each is restricted in aesthetic power and is more an archaeological specimen than a legitimate art product. In this latter statement appears a suggestion of the last major failure of much autobiography. That is, waiving all concern for the artistic quality of the work, some autobiography is valueless or does not begin to realize its potential worth, simply because the author himself is a poor conductor of experience.

These then, stated very briefly, are the advantages and disadvantages of autobiography as an object of research. If in this appraisal the emphasis given the disadvantages is severe, it is not intended to suggest that they outweigh the advantages of the medium, but rather to show that the advantages are modified. In just what proportion the faults offset the virtues cannot, of course, be said precisely, but some basis for an estimate will become apparent as this study proceeds.

Two further details remain for consideration. First, mention should be made of the types of material which are to be considered autobiographical for the purposes of this study. In this matter the practice here will follow the precedent set by Mark Van Doren in his anthology, An Autobiography of America.¹ In that work the editor utilized all types of personal writing including diaries, letters, newspaper articles, and journals as well as formal autobiographies. The single requirement is that whatever the literary form, the author shall be writing directly, and without fictional embellishment of his own life, experiences, and observations. The formal definition of autobiography is more exclusive than that given above. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary² gives this interpretation: "A biography written by the subject of it; memoirs of one's life written by oneself."

1. Van Doren, Mark, Ed., An Autobiography of America, A. & C. Boni, New York, 1929.

2. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, fifth edition, G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass., 1946

In this strict sense some of the works considered in this discussion, particularly the journals and diaries of early travelers, are not true autobiographies. They are sufficiently close to autobiographical writing, however, to form a worthwhile addition to this study, while to exclude them would severely limit its perspective.

In regard to the stipulation that the autobiographies shall be Kentucky examples, this simply means that the work must be directly related to life in Kentucky, not that the authors must be native Kentuckians, or even that all the experiences described shall have occurred in Kentucky. This interpretation is necessary in order that the important realm of experience represented by travelers to and from Kentucky may also be included.

The form of this study is a balance among several principles of organization, a plan made necessary by the widely varying quality and significance of Kentucky autobiography. One intent of the thesis is to recount the history of this literature, a purpose which suggests a simple chronological order. Together with this intention, however, is the second one of evaluating these autobiographies as cultural products, a purpose which, by assigning varying importance to different works, unavoidably distorts the consideration given different eras, and which, by showing relations other than those of time, makes it desirable to diverge from a simple order of succession. Therefore, this study will proceed in a general way from earliest to latest, but will also seek to group distinct types of autobiography .

The works consulted in the preparation of this thesis are limited

to those available in the University of Louisville Library, The Filson Club, and the Louisville Free Public Library. I wish to thank Miss Hattie Kinkead, librarian at the Filson Club, for helping me to obtain many of the autobiographies discussed in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

EARLY KENTUCKY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Autobiographical writing began in Kentucky in the year 1750 with a series of works describing travel and adventure. These travel-adventure autobiographies are, from a literary viewpoint, primitives by reason of their formlessness and because of their deficiency in intellectual and aesthetic quality. The evaluation of a work as primitive is not necessarily a reflection on the author because two explanations are possible for this classification: first, that the author was capable of better work but was hindered in the full use of his talent by the primitive physical condition of society; second, that the writer as the human product of a primitive environment achieved little or no development of intellectual or artistic sense.

Of the contents of early Kentucky autobiography, of the subjects which engross the attention of these first authors, four general topics recur most frequently; these are violence, migration, commerce, and religion. Two of these elements, those of religion and violence, remain as relatively permanent characteristics of Kentucky life and reappear consistently throughout autobiography to the present era. The element of migration tends to die out and appears less frequently after 1825. The commercial compulsion likewise loses some of its former intensity in the later autobiography and, while still present, is generally sublimated in more complex motivation and does not, consequently, dominate the content of the autobiography.

Turning now to an illustration of these concepts by specific examples

from Kentucky autobiography, it is well to begin by presenting the evidence that this literature first began in 1750. The definitive statement of the origin of autobiographical writing in Kentucky is given by Colonel R. T. Durrett in a preface which he wrote to Mr. J. Stoddard Johnston's First Explorations of Kentucky.¹

The earliest ... explorations, in what is now Kentucky, that are known to us by written records, were by Doctor Thomas Walker and Colonel Christopher Gist, about the middle of the last [eighteenth] century. ... Other explorers, as missionaries or traders, were on these rivers and lands before Walker and Gist, but they left no account of the country which has come down to us. Authoritative records of explorations in this region begin with the journals of Doctor Walker in 1750, and that of Colonel Gist in 1751.²

The journals of Walker and Gist are excellent examples of the travel-adventure type of Kentucky autobiography and both are written in a simple or primitive literary style. These two authors, from what is known of their lives, were seemingly capable of better work, and apparently these journals exemplify that class of literature in which the potential excellence was frustrated by the exigencies of frontier life. Colonel Johnston describes Walker's background.

Doctor Thomas Walker was born in King and Queen County, Virginia, January 25, 1715.

While the records of the family do not contain much of the details of the lives of its earlier representatives, they show them to have been of a sturdy stock, and to have belonged to the class of Virginia planters which constituted the most respectable and influential element of the colonial population.

1. Johnston, J. Stoddard, First Explorations of Kentucky, Louisville, Ky., John P. Morton & Co., 1898.

2. Ibid., p. ii.

It is to be regretted that but little is known of the early life of Doctor Walker or of his educational advantages, but it is inferred that he enjoyed the best afforded at that time in the colony, and that he attended the academical or medical course, one or both, of William and Mary College.

He was the intimate friend of Peter Jefferson, the father of the author of the Declaration of Independence, and at his death, became his executor and the guardian of his illustrious son.¹

Typically, and in accord with the pattern of interests already noted, Walker, the first explorer of Kentucky to leave an autobiographical account of his experiences, came to Kentucky in 1750 to survey the commercial possibilities of the territory. Doctor Walker was employed as the surveyor and agent to make locations for the Loyal Land Company, one of two great enterprises organized in 1748 - 1749 and having for its object the territory in Southwestern Virginia and Kentucky. In the following passage, the first entry in Walker's journal, observe in the reference to the river, the identification of natural beauty with economic utility. All the grammatical forms are presented here as they appear in the original manuscript.

March 7th. [1750] We set off about 8, but the day proving wet, we only went to Thomas Joplin's on Rockfish. This is a pretty River, which might at

1. Ibid., p. 1, 3. Thomas P. Abernethy, discussing Walker's background says: "His [Doctor Thomas Walker's] ancestors are supposed to have emigrated from Staffordshire, England, to Tidewater, Virginia, in the middle of the seventeenth century; and he is believed to have received his education at the college of William and Mary, but there is uncertainty in both cases." The Dictionary of American Biography, ed. Dumas Malone, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936, vol. XIX, p. 360.

a small expense be made fit for transporting tobacco; but it has lately been stopped by a Mill Dam near the Mouth to the prejudice of the upper inhabitants who would at their own expense clear and make it navigable, were they permitted.¹

Four days later appears another entry which is simple but significant.

11th. The Sabbath.²

Walker conscientiously observed the custom of setting aside the seventh day for religious devotion and traveled on Sundays only in case of extreme necessity.

For the most part, Walker only records the barest physical details of each day's experience, giving a monotonous consistency to his journal which is characteristic of much early Kentucky autobiography. The following two entries typify page after page of this work.

[March] 9th. [1750] As the weather continues unlikely, I moved only to Baylor Walker's Quarters.³

[March] 19th. [1750] We could not find our Horses and spent the day in looking for them. In the evening we found their track.⁴

This economy of expression leads inadvertently to some ludicrous descriptions, which convey, simultaneously with their humor, a suggestion of the grimness of frontier life, an existence which hardened people to experiences that, in more recent times, would be considered adventurous. An example of this kind is the following passage with its interesting

1. Op. cit., p. 34.

2. Ibid., p. 35.

3. Ibid., p. 35.

4. Ibid., p. 40.

sequence of events.

[April] 19th. [1750] We left the River but in four miles we came on it again at the Mouth of Licking Creek, which we went up and down another. In the Fork of Licking Creek is a Lick much used by Buffaloes and many large Roads lead to it. This afternoon Ambrose Powell was bit by a bear in his Knee. We rode 7 miles this day.¹

An experience of unusually great interest to Walker, to judge from the lengthy description devoted to it, was his observation of a religious group which had taken advantage of the freedom of the frontier to organize themselves economically as well as religiously.

[March] 17th, [1750] ... The Duncards are an odd set of people, who make it a matter of Religion not to Shave their Beards, ly on Beds, or eat flesh, though at present, in the last, they transgress, being constrained to it as they say, by the want of a sufficiency of Grain and Roots, they having not long been seated here. I doubt the plenty and deliciousness of the Venison & Turkeys has contributed not a little to this. The unmarried have no private Property, but live on a common Stock. They dont baptize either Young or Old, they keep their Sabbath on Saturday, & hold that all men shall be happy hereafter, but first must pass through punishment according to their Sins. They are very hospitable.²

In this passage it is evident that Walker's first interest is in the ritual advocated by the Dunkards rather than in the philosophical conceptions which give rise to these rules of conduct. Perhaps the most noteworthy characteristic of this passage is the satirical observation Walker makes of the Dunkard's indulgence in eating meat: "... The Dunkards ... make it a matter of religion not to ... eat flesh, though at present ... they transgress, being constrained to it as they say, by the want of a

1. Ibid., p. 51.

2. Ibid., p. 39.

sufficiency of Grain and Roots, They having not long been seated here. I doubt the plenty and deliciousness of the Venison & Turkeys has contributed not a little to this."¹ This flash of humor is a rare exception not only to Walker's sober style but to the customary austerity of early Kentucky autobiography in general.

The next example of Kentucky autobiography produced after Walker's journal is a work which forms a companion piece to it, the journal of Christopher Gist. As in the case of Walker, the early life of Gist is obscure. Colonel Durrett, in his preface to J. Stoddard Johnston's First Explorations of Kentucky, says of Gist:

Christopher Gist, who was one of the earliest and most intelligent explorers of the country west of the Alleghanies, was the son of Richard and Zipporah (Murray) Gist, and was a native of Maryland ... Little is known of his early life but the evidence he has left in his journals ... and correspondence indicate that he enjoyed the advantages of an education superior to that of many of his calling in those early days.²

Although little is known which would enable one to appraise Gist's ability as a writer, apart from the indecisive evidence of his journal, a great deal is known of the motives which lead him into the back country. Like Walker, Gist undertook his explorations in 1751 for commercial reasons. He was employed by the Ohio Company, the other of the two great land enterprises formed in 1748, to survey that territory which is now Kentucky and part of Ohio. In addition to that assignment, Gist had a diplomatic mission to perform, that of soliciting the allegiance of the Indians to England. For, beginning some years earlier, the French had been systematically cultivating

1. Ibid., p. 39.

2. Ibid., p. 85.

the friendship of the Indian tribes in the Midwest and inciting them to suspicion and hostility toward the British in the interest of French imperialism.

Christopher Gist's journal, like Walker's, contains page after page of arid prose describing only the barest physical details of his daily experience.¹ The following is a typical series of entries.

Thursday Nov. 1. [1750] - Then N 1 Mile
N 30 E 3 M. here I was taken sick and Stayed
all Night.

Friday 2. - N 30 E 6 M, here I was so bad
that I was not able to proceed any farther that
Night, but grew better in the Morning.

Saturday 3. - N 8 M to Juniata, a large
Branch of Susquehannah, where I stayed all Night.

Sunday 4. - Crossed Juniatta [sic] and went
up it S 55 W about 16 M.²

The fourfold pattern of migration, violence, religion and commerce, which was submitted at the opening of this chapter as the most common subject matter of early Kentucky autobiography, is corroborated in Gist's journal. One of the longest single entries in this diary is a description of a religious ceremony which Gist conducted on Christmas Day, 1750.

Tuesday 25. - This being Christmass Day,
I intended to read Prayers, but after inviting
some of the White Men, they informed each other
of my Intentions, and being of several different
Persuasions, and few of them inclined to hear any

1. Gist employed a peculiar abbreviated terminology for recording the extent of his daily travel. This system always began with a letter denoting direction, as, N., S., E., or W., followed by the deviation, in degrees and direction, if any. As an example, an entry reading, N 40 E, meant, North by 40 degrees East. This notation would be followed by the distance traveled in this direction, similarly abbreviated, as 4 M, meaning, four miles. Because, as a usual thing, Gist traveled an irregular course, and recorded successively each leg of this course in his daily entries, his autobiography, in some places, has the aspect of a logarithm table.

2. Ibid., p. 104.

Good, they refused to come. But one Thomas Burney a Black Smith who is settled there went about and talked to them, & several of them came, and Andrew Montour invited several of the well disposed Indians, who came freely; by this Time the Morning was spent, and I had given over all Thoughts of them, but seeing Them come, to oblige All and offend None, I stood up and said, Gentlemen, I have no Design or Intention to give Offense to any particular Sectary or Religion, but as our King indulges us all in a Liberty of Conscience and hinders none of You in the Exercise of your religious Worship, so it would be unjust in you to endeavor to stop the Propagation of His: The Doctrine of the Salvation Faith, and good Works, is what I only propose to treat of, as I find it extracted from the Homilies of the Church of England, which I read them in the best manner I could, and after I had done the Interpreter told the Indians what I had read, and that it was the true Faith which the great King and His Church recommended to his Children: The Indians seemed well pleased, and came up to Me and returned Me their Thanks; and then invited Me to live among Them; and gave Me a Name in their Language Annosansh: the Interpreter told me this was a Name of a good Man that had formerly lived among them, and their King said that must be always my Name, for which I returned them Thanks; but as to living among them I excused myself by saying I did not know whether the Governor would give me leave, and if he did the French would come and carry me away as they had done the English Traders, to which they answered I might bring great Guns and make a Fort, that they had now left the French, and were very desirous of being instructed in the Principles of Christianity; that they liked Me very well and wanted Me to marry Them after the Christian Manner, and baptize their Children; and then they said they would never desire to return to the French, or suffer Them or their Priests to come near them more, for they loved the English¹

1. Ibid., p. 104.

First, it should be observed that an occasion of religious importance constitutes the theme of this entry, which is one of the longest in Gist's journal. An alliance between spiritual interests and temporal affairs is shown here also. Gist was traveling on business which was ultimately the king's and publicly practicing a religion sponsored by the king. Most interesting of all is the relationship subsisting between the Indians and the white men shown in this passage. The language used by the author is patronizing and paternalistic. Gist addressed the Indians in much the same way adults frequently speak to children, substituting simplified, false explanations for the correct but more intricate conceptions. In this instance, the faith of the King of England is recommended to the Indians who are called his "children." The Indians give a comic touch to this pretended adult - child relation, for while they accept the role of child in this conversation, they show themselves to be as shrewd in their diplomacy as are the English. An analysis of the passage just quoted shows the ideas exchanged to have been more subtle than the language used suggests. Thus, Gist performed a religious ceremony in the name of the Church of England and recommended this faith to the Indians. The Indians then made the childlike proposal that Gist live with them. Gist declined for the equally childlike reason that the governor wouldn't let him, and then, taking this opportunity to introduce the business which brought him there, added suggestively that the French might, "carry me away as they had done the English Traders," a statement testing the sympathies of the Indians. The latter replied, in effect, that if the English would fortify the village there would be no reason for either the English or the Indians to fear the French. This counter proposal halted the negotiations in uncertainty. A more obvious example

of the technique the English used in dealing with the Indians is shown in the following passage. Again the suggestion of commercialism is present.

Sunday January 13. - This Day George Croghan by the Assistance of Andrew Montour, acquainted the King and Council of this Nation [Wyandotte] (by presenting them four Strings of Wampum) that the great King over the Water, their Roggony (Father) had sent under the care of the Governor of Virginia, their Brother, a large Present of Goods which was now landed safe in Virginia, & the Governor had sent Me to invite them to come and see Him & partake of their Father's Charity to all his Children on the Branches of the Ohio. In Answer to which one of the Chiefs stood up and said, That their King and all of Them thanked their Brother the Governor of Virginia for his Care, and Me for bringing them the News, but they could not give Me an answer untill they had a full or general Council of the several Nations of Indians which could not be till next Spring: & so the King and Council shaking Hands with Us We took our Leave.¹

This peaceful activity of diplomacy was interrupted with grim reminders of the ominous potential of violence always present in frontier life. The first description of the brutality which was to become a primary constituent of the experience recorded in Kentucky autobiography appears in Gist's account of an episode which occurred the day after Christmas in the year 1750.

Wednesday Dec. 26. - This day a Woman, who had been a long Time a prisoner, and had deserted, & been retaken, and brought into the Town on Christmass Eve, was put to Death in the following manner: They carried her without the Town & let her loose, and when she attempted to run away, the Persons appointed for that Purpose pursued her, & struck Her on the Ear, on the right side of her Head, which beat her flat on her Face on the Ground; they then struck

1. Ibid., p. 120.

her several Times, thro the Back with a Dart, to the Heart, scalped Her, & threw the Soalp in the Air, and another Cut off her Head: There the dismal Spectacle lay till the Evening, & then Barny Curran desired Leave to bury Her, which He and his Men, and some of the Indians did just at Dark.¹

Apart from its significance in revealing the barbarous conditions of life in the early era of the frontier, this passage is valuable in two other ways. It shows first, the conditioning effect which life in the interior had on those who experienced it. Gist had seemingly adjusted himself pretty well to the harsh way of life which this wanton murder represented. His description of the event is almost entirely detached, the single emotional comment in his recital being contained in the use of the adjective, dismal, to modify the noun, spectacle. The other point to be made of this quotation depends on a work which properly belongs in the chapter on the confession autobiography and, consequently, consideration of this problem will be taken up there. It is sufficient to say at this time that the autobiography referred to, The Confession of Jereboam O. Bauchamp, deals with a similar situation which occurred seventy-five years later, in 1825, but represents a complete revolution from the social attitude which Gist evinces.

An excellent summary of the total import of these several reflections of frontier life in Gist's journal is made in another episode which that author reports. The passage has a simple eloquence whose power the speaker probably did not suspect.

Tuesday 15. - We left Muskingum, and

1. Ibid., p. 118.

went W 5 M, to the White Woman's Creek, on which is a small Town; this White Woman was taken away from New England, when she was not above ten years old, by the French Indians; She is now upwards of fifty, and has an Indian Husband and several Children - Her name is Mary Harris, she still remembers they used to be very religious in New England, and wonders how the White Men can be so wicked as she has seen them in these Woods.¹

Turning from the subject of violence to that of commerce, it is evident that Gist evinced a sense of the aesthetic similar to Walker's, a taste which identified beauty with economic utility. The process of thinking which led to this aesthetic judgement suggests an important insight into the whole mechanism of art appreciation. A careful reading of the following passage will show with what unconscious ease the two ideas of use and beauty were integrated.

Sunday 17. [February, 1751.] - Crossed the little Miami River, and altering our course We went S W 25 M, to the big Miami River, opposite the Twigtee Town. All the Way from the Shannoah Town to this Place (except the first 20 M which is broken) is fine, rich level Land, well timbered with large Walnut, Ash, Sugar Trees, Cherry Trees, &c, it is well watered with a great Number of little Streams or Rivulets, and full of beautiful natural Meadows, covered with wild Rye, blue grass and Clover, and abounds with Turkeys, Deer, Elks and most sorts of Game particularly Buffaloes, thirty or forty of which are frequently seen feeding in one Meadow: In short it wants nothing but Cultivation to make it a most delightfull Country - The Ohio and all the large Branches are said to be full of fine Fish of several Kinds, particularly a Sort of Cat Fish of a prodigious Size ...²

1. Ibid., p. 121.

2. Ibid., p. 133.

The next important work, chronologically speaking, found in Kentucky autobiography is the famous narrative erroneously attributed to Daniel Boone. Boone entered Kentucky in 1769, just nineteen years after Gist and Walker, but his memoirs were not published until 1784 when they appeared in the book Kentucke¹ published by John Filson. Boone's alleged autobiography is a unique type and must be placed in a category by itself because it is spurious. W. J. Ghent says of this work:

Modern criticism has dealt destructively with the Boone legend. Boone first came into general notice by means of John Filson's The Discovery, Settlement, and Present State of Kentucke (1784), purporting to be told by Boone himself, but given in words that Boone could not possibly have used.²

Even though this work is not a true autobiography at all, but, rather, a romanticized biography, it is still deserving of consideration herein because it gives an indication of what kind of material was believed by the real author to suitably represent autobiographical writing. The motive underlying the creation of this work was apparently a commercial one. Filson owned land in Kentucky and was interested in advertising the new country to attract settlers. It is significant to observe that Filson chose, as the means for implementing his design, the heroic figure of Daniel Boone which has come to symbolize the stalwart independence of frontier life. Filson, of course, devised speeches in which he represents Boone as extolling the pleasantness of life in Kentucky and manages it effectively.

1. Filson, John, Kentucke and The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone, Louisville, Ky., J. P. Morton & Co., 1934.

2. Ghent, W. J., The Dictionary of American Biography, "Daniel Boone," ed. Allen Johnson, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, vol. II, p. 441.

The narrative possesses an unusual eloquence, commands a certain dramatic power which gives the autobiography an artistry sufficient to distinguish it among the literary products of that era in Kentucky. However, and this is of particular significance, the work does not rise beyond the simple range of subject matter employed by Gist and Walker.

The following passage from this work has been selected to illustrate two qualities: first, the fluency of the language; second, the acceptance of the way of life and the ideas of life that appear in other frontier autobiography. In this quotation the four themes of commerce, religion, violence, and migration appear together.

CURIOSITY is natural to the soul of man, and interesting objects have a powerful influence on our affections. Let these influencing powers actuate, by the permission or disposal of Providence, from selfish or social views, yet in time the mysterious will of Heaven is unfolded, and we behold our conduct, from whatsoever motives excited, operating to answer the important designs of heaven. Thus we behold Kentucke, lately an howling wilderness, the habitation of savages and wild beasts, become a fruitful field; this region, so favourably distinguished by nature, now become the habitation of civilization, at a period unparalleled in history, in the midst of a raging war, and under all the disadvantages of emigration to a country so remote from all the inhabited parts of the continent. Here; where the hand of violence shed the blood of the innocent; where the horrid yells of the savages, and the groans of the distressed, sounded in our ears, we now hear the praises and adorations of our Creator; where wretched wigwams stood, the miserable abodes of savages, we behold the foundations of cities laid, that, in all probability, will rival the glory of the greatest upon earth. And we view Kentucke

situated on the fertile banks of the great Ohio, rising from obscurity to shine with splendor, equal to any other of the stars of the American hemisphere.¹

Although the generally optimistic and moralizing tone of this summary is attributable to its intended function as advertising, the passage is founded in its physical details on real experiences. In relating these events, Filson tells his reader much about frontier life which other writers neglect. For example, he supplies an emotional setting to the peril and isolation of Boone's early explorations. Unfortunately, this passage also is suspect as a piece of romanticism when its purpose is recalled.

We [Boone and his brother] were ... in a dangerous, helpless situation, exposed daily to perils and death amongst savages and wild beasts, not a white man in the country but ourselves.

Thus situated, many hundred miles from our families in the howling wilderness, I believe few would have equally enjoyed the happiness we experienced. I often observed to my brother, You see now how little nature requires to be satisfied. Felicity, the companion of content, is rather found in our own breasts than in the enjoyment of external things: And I firmly believe it requires but a little philosophy to make a man happy in whatsoever state he is. This consists in a full resignation to the will of Providence; and a resigned soul finds pleasure in a path strewn with briars and thorns.²

Despite the commercial intentions of this work, there is a genuine beauty in its composition. The dignity and power of the prose style and

1. Ibid., p. 49.

2. Ibid., p. 53.

the charm of the descriptive passages argue for sincerity and even inspiration, and capture for the modern reader the awe and delight which explorers must have felt at that time almost two centuries ago when the Ohio Vally was just opening up. Many of the descriptions become more pleasing with rereading and have the statliness of some of Abraham Lincoln's addresses. The following passage, happily devoid of references to productive power, describes the beauties of the country.

One day I undertook a tour through the country, and the diversity and beauties of nature I met with in this charming season, expelled every gloomy and vexatious thought. Just at the close of day the gentle gales retired, and left the place to the disposal of a profound calm. Not a breeze shook the most tremulous leaf. I had gained the summit of a commanding ridge, and, looking round with astonishing delight, beheld the ample plains, the beautiful tracts below. On the other hand, I surveyed the famous river Ohio that rolled in silent dignity, marking the western boundary of Kentucke with inconceivable grandeur. At a vast distance I beheld the mountains lift their venerable brows, and penetrate the clouds. All things were still.¹

But even in a work devoted to praise of the frontier, the harsh realities of life in that region could not be excluded; the pattern familiar in Walker's and Gist's journals appears in Filson's narrative. There is, for instance, this description of a skirmish Boone had with the Indians.

This promising beginning [of an expedition into the wilderness] was soon overcast with a cloud of adversity; for

1. Ibid., p. 55.

upon the tenth day of October [1773], the rear of our company was attacked by a number of Indians, who killed six and wounded one man. Of these my eldest son was one that fell in the action. Though we defended ourselves, and repulsed the enemy, yet this unhappy affair scattered our cattle, brought us into extreme difficulty, and so discouraged the whole company, that we retreated forty miles to the settlement on Clinch River.¹

Boone apparently, like Walker and Gist, practiced the technique of deceiving the Indians. In his purported autobiography is a description of how he defaulted in athletic contests to gain their friendship.

I often went a hunting with them [the Indians], and frequently gained their applause for my activity at our shooting-matches. I was careful not to exceed many of them in shooting; for no people are more envious than they in this sport. I could observe, in their countenances and gestures, the greatest expressions of joy when they exceeded me; and, when the reverse happened, of envy.²

By the end of the eighteenth century, and during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the number of travelers entering Kentucky, and consequently, the number of autobiographical writers describing experiences related to life in this region, increased considerably. This increasing quantity was not paralleled by any great diversity in quality. Essentially, the importance of these added works is only to reinforce the generalizations already illustrated herein. Representative examples of these later works are the journals of Andre Michaux and of his son, Francois Andre Michaux, two learned Frenchman who passed through Kentucky about the turn of the nineteenth century. Reuben Gold Thwaites, editor of the anthology, Early

1. Ibid., p. 57.

2. Ibid., p. 65.

Western Travels, gives the exact date of their separate journeys.

We publish in this volume Andre Michaux's journal of his travels into Kentucky from 1793-96 ... and a reprint of the English version of Travels to the West of the Alleghany Mountains made in 1802 by his son Francois Andre Michaux ...¹

Both the elder Michaux and his son were naturalists and traveled in America to survey the physical resources of the country. Andre Michaux's journal is strongly reminiscent of the work of Walker and Gist in its monotonous uniformity. The following entries are typical.

The 22nd. [July 1793] Started from Bedford and breakfasted at a place 4 miles distant where the Pittsburg Road divides into two. We took the right hand road; the Rain compelled us to stop and sleep only twelve miles from Bedford.

The 23rd. We made 24 miles and passed the summit of the Alleghanys.

The 24th. We made 25 Miles.

The 25th. We passed by Greensburg and made 31 Miles.²

This unattractive subject matter is further aggravated by the author's frequent inclusion of lists of plants denoted by their Latin names.

The 29th herborised; recognized on the banks of the Monogahela, *Dracocephalum Virginianum*, *Bignonia Radicans*, *Crotalaria Alba* ? These plants grow on the banks of the river which are submerged when the waters are high.³

Francois Michaux employed a smoother and more articulate prose style than did his father but persisted in using essentially the same subject matter. The title page of his work describes the nature of the contents and emphasizes again the commercial interest of many of these early travelers.

1. Thwaites, Reuben Gold, Early Western Travels, "Journal of Andre Michaux," and "Journal of Francois Andre Michaux," Cleveland, Ohio, The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904. p. 11.

2. Ibid., p. 28.

3. Ibid., p. 29.

TRAVELS
 TO THE WEST OF THE
 ALLEGHANY MOUNTAINS,
 IN THE STATES OF
 OHIO,
 KENTUCKY, AND TENNESSEE,
 AND BACK TO CHARLESTOWN, BY THE UPPER
 CAROLINES;
 COMPRISING
 The most interesting Details on the present State of
 Agriculture.

AND
 THE NATURAL PRODUCE OF THOSE COUNTRIES:
 TOGETHER WITH
 Particulars relative to the Commerce that exists between the above-
 mentioned States, and those situated East of the Mountains
 and Low Louisiana,
 UNDERTAKEN IN THE YEAR 1802,

...

...

By F. A. MICHAUX ¹

From New England, in the first quarter of the nineteenth century,
 came two travelers who left important autobiographical accounts of their
 experiences. The first and better known of these was Timothy Flint, a Har-
 vard graduate, whose Recollections of the Last Ten Years ² records the

1. Ibid., Title page.

2. Flint, Timothy, Recollections of the Last Ten Years, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1932.

observations of a minister on frontier life. This autobiography by Timothy Flint is a document of primary value in this discussion. The best testimony to its importance is that it disrupts the general themes so far developed in this chapter. The work is exceptional because it breaks the chain of simple travel-adventure autobiographies so far introduced. Flint's book, far from being primitive in a literary sense, is to be ranked not only with the finest autobiography ever produced in Kentucky, but is a first class contribution to American letters generally. Mr. C. Hartley Grattan, who prepared this edition¹ of Flint's work, gives an illuminating interpretation of his character. Mr. Grattan begins with the details of Flint's heritage and education.

Timothy Flint was a clergyman sent out by the Missionary Society of Connecticut to assist in establishing the Presbyterian Church in the wilderness. He was born at North Reading, Massachusetts, on July 11, 1780, of a well-established family of farmers and clergymen. ... Prepared by private tutors and at Phillips Academy in Andover, he entered Harvard in 1796, graduating in 1800 ...²

Mr. Grattan discusses the motives which impelled Flint to leave New England and go into the interior, a matter of great importance for a proper understanding of the author. Flint partook of the same impulse which drove so many people to the backcountry, that is, he was unhappy and dissatisfied in his own community. It was this common ground with the backwoodsman which, probably, accounts for his generous and even exaggerated sympathy with, and interest in, them. Mr. Grattan mentions that "in addition to the religious motive Flint had the idea that life in a warmer country would benefit his health, an opinion in which he was mistaken."³ The

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p. vi.

3. Ibid., p. vii.

editor continues by assessing Flint's mind.

He was constitutionally optimistic and emotional in his personal relations and in his judgement of mankind. He was enough of a romantic to believe in the essential goodness of mankind, at least under American institutions- and in so far as he so believed, he was distant from Calvinism. His religion was a compound of emotional optimism and conventional morality. He was not a theologian in any sense and exhibits many of the stigmata of the Anglo-American dissenting mind set up by Dr. T. C. Hall: hostility to the Roman Catholic Church, respect for economic success, and emphasis on the religion of the heart.¹

The editor summarizes Flint's attitude toward the American social scene of his day.

He then [1815 - 1825] saw the Valley in its American beginnings. His subsequent journeys gave him data on its growth - They confirmed his optimism.²

Grattan concludes the passage:

All in all, it is just to say that Flint was a complacent optimist about the present and future of his country. His satire and sarcasm were reserved for obvious but transient abuses. He saw no incapacitating inherent flaws.³

While describing Flint's attitude toward secular affairs, Mr. Grattan thinks it appropriate to recall an observation by Alexis de Tocqueville of which part is:

Thus religious zeal is perpetually warmed in the United States by the fires of patriotism. These men do not act exclusively from a consideration of a future

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1. Ibid., p. x.
 2. Ibid., p. ix.
 3. Ibid., p. xi.

life; eternity is only one motive of their devotion to the cause. If you converse with these missionaries of Christian civilization, you will be surprised to hear them speak so often of the goods of this world, and to meet a politician where you expected to find a priest.¹

All of these factors, education, personality, and social alignment, emerge in Flint's writing. Mr. Grattan summarizes his achievement as an author:

It was he [Flint] who replied to the aspersions of the conservative East and who gave a coherent critical expression of the frontier ideals. Without ever submerging himself in frontier life, he yet thoroughly understood and appreciated it.²

Mr. Grattan concludes on the following page:

He was forced to take strict account of the shortcomings of the frontier and the frontiersman as few of his time did. Flint's verdict was, consequently, authoritative.³

This partial resume of Flint's life and work by Mr. Grattan, furnishes a sufficient number of terms concerning the author that the task of relating his autobiography to the others discussed in this chapter may begin. First, some examples of Flint's comments on Kentucky life will be given. The author always writes with a certain restraint, yet his optimistic outlook and his desire to portray the frontier in a favorable light, both noted by Grattan, give his account a romanticism, which taken with Filson's exalted picture of Kentucky, undoubtedly contributed much to the legendary conception of this state.

In my whole tour through this state,
I experienced a frank and cordial hospitality.

-
1. Ibid., p. xli.
 2. Ibid., p. v.
 3. Ibid., p. vi.

... The Kentuckians, it must be admitted, are a high minded people, and possess the stamina of a noble character. It cannot be said correctly, as is said in journals and geographies, that they are too recent and too various in their descent and manners, to have a distinct character as a people. They are generally of one descent, and are scions from a noble stock - the descendants from affluent and respectable planters from Virginia and North Carolina. They are in that condition in life, which is, perhaps, best calculated to develop high-mindedness, and self-respect.

... Kentucky is proudly exalted, as a common mother of the western states. It seems to be generally understood, that birth and rearing in that state, constitute a kind of prescriptive claim upon office, as formerly birth in Old Spain did, to office in her colonies. ... Her modes of thinking and action dictate the fashion to the rest. The peculiar hardihood, energy, and enthusiasm of her character, will tend long to perpetuate this empire.

The inhabitants of Kentucky who are more enthusiastic and national than the other western people, and look with a proud disdain upon the younger states, designate their own state, with the veneration due to age, by the name of "Old Kentucky." To them it is the home of all that is good, fertile, happy, and great. As the English are said to go to battle with a song extolling their roast beef, instead of saying their prayers, so the Kentuckian, when about to encounter danger, rushes upon it, crying, "Hurra for old Kentucky." ¹

In all of these statements there is that kind of truth known as folklore; but that they are an imperfect statement of cultural history is manifest, particularly since they uniformly imply that the Kentuckian is a distinct cultural type. These remarks are contradicted, in part, by other passages in the same work. One other important stimulus should be noted which would urge Flint to give a romanticized and exalted statement

1. Ibid., pp. 62 ff.

of the character of these Kentucky frontiersmen. Flint, in defending the Kentuckians from the criticisms of the easterners, was in a very real sense, defending himself, for he, like they, was something of a refugee, a misfit exiled from the codified society of the East. The very clearest illustration that Flint was contributing to legend as well as to fact when he wrote about Kentucky, is revealed in an interesting re-interpretation which may be made of the following passage from the Recollections.

... the first settlement of the country [Kentucky], The delightful scenes, which it opened, the singular character of the first adventurers, who seem to have been a compound of the hero, the philosopher, the farmer, and the savage; the fierce struggle, which the savages made to retain this delightful domain, and which, before that struggle was settled, gave it the name of "the bloody ground," - these circumstances, conspire to designate this country as the theatre, and the time of its settlement, as the period, of romance. The adventures of Daniel Boon would make no mean show beside those of other heroes and adventurers. But although much has been said in prose and sung in verse, about Daniel Boon, this Achilles of the West wants a Homer, worthily to celebrate his exploits. ¹

This quotation, for the most part, speaks for itself, in sustaining the point made herein, that Flint was inclined at times to view the frontier in a romantic light. The part of this passage to be re-interpreted is not immediately obvious, but once the translation is made, results in a startling coincidence. I refer to the line in which Flint describes "the singular character of the first adventurers, who seem to have been a compound of the hero, the philosopher,

1. Ibid., p. 66.

the farmer, and the savage..." Observe that the characterization is composed of four major traits. Now, by loosely rephrasing these four types in terms of the ideas associated with them it is possible to derive the four-fold pattern of experience appearing in other early Kentucky autobiography. That is: the savage is associated with violence; the farmer represents the economic interest of the frontiersman; the philosopher, especially in the sense in which Flint used the title, is the exponent of religion; and the hero is the migrant, the man who undertakes the hazardous journey into the wilderness. Thus, the Recollections, even with its romantic tendencies, contributes to the major generalizations made in this thesis. Flint's story is one long recital of violence, movement, religion, and economic interest. For example, he says in his introduction:

I speak not of the vicissitudes of disease and suffering which I have endured; of the trials and privations which I have encountered. The retrospect is too gloomy for myself, and would, probably, be neither of interest nor use to my readers.¹

Flint describes the tremendous flux and mobility of the frontier population which, in itself, makes the concept of a distinctive Kentuckian an anomaly.

It is melancholy to consider, that the ancient character for permanence, which our societies used to have, is passing away in all directions.

I shall have occasion elsewhere, to remark upon the moving or migratory character of the western people generally, and of this state in particular [Kentucky]. Though they have generally good houses, they might as well,

1. Ibid., p. 6.

like the Tartars, dwell in tents. Every thing shifts under your eye. The present occupants sell, pack up, depart. Strangers replace them. Before they have gained the confidence of their neighbors, they hear of a better place, pack up and follow their precursors.¹

Similar evidence could be presented at great length from Flint's work to substantiate the concepts proposed in this chapter.

Even from this brief summary, it is certainly clear in what qualities Flint's autobiography excels. This author was a student of literature and of the Greek and Roman classics; when he came to the frontier, he saw it in a perspective which embraced the traditional learning and values of western culture. And because he was a minister, his first interest in the frontier was, using the term loosely, a humanistic one, not a material or commercial one. These qualities in the man enabled him to produce an autobiography which is distinguished, intellectually, because the author rose above the events of his experience to interpret and evaluate them; and which is distinguished, artistically, by Flint's power to discriminate between the petty and the important in human affairs, by his talent for description, by his reliable sense of beauty and by his strangely sad humor.

George W. Ogden was another New Englander who visited Kentucky about the same time as Flint. Although Ogden is a lesser known figure, his autobiography is still useful for the purposes of this discussion. Thwaites describes Ogden as "... a Quaker merchant from the Massachusetts town of New Bedford, who early in 1821 went on a business journey to the Western country, where he remained two years."² Ogden is important because he

1. Ibid., p. 75.

2. Thwaites, Reuben Gold, Op. cit., p. 11.

sounds a significant chord in terms of historical development; he represents the growing movement against slavery. It is important to observe, however, in the following passage, that this new view is compounded of familiar elements, is still a mixture of commercial interest, religion, and violence, this last now in the master-slave relationship.

"... the chief attention of the people, is given to the culture of Tobacco, and it is not unfrequently the case, in travelling through it to see fields of from ten to thirty acres, in a high state of cultivation, and growing to a luxuriance of which it would be difficult for the imagination of our eastern people to conceive. But, by whom, alas! is all the labor performed? Is it done by the planters themselves? No. It is performed by that suffering part of our species, for whom such powerful exertions are now making, both in Europe and America, for their emancipation. The cruel and even unusual punishment daily inflicted on these wretched creatures, enfeebled, oppressed with hunger, labor, and the lash, are too shocking even to be mentioned. The scenes of misery and distress constantly witnessed in the states of Virginia and Kentucky, the wounds and lacerations occasioned by demoralized masters and overseers, most of whom exhibit a strange compound of ignorance and depravity, torture the feelings of the passing stranger, and wring blood from his heart. Good God! why sleeps thy vengeance? Why permit those, who call themselves Christians, to trample on all the rights of humanity, to enslave and degrade the sons and daughters of Africa? My God, I blush, O! human nature, I blush for thee, yea, hell blushes before me, when I say it is for the upbuilding of these planters, in idleness, drunkenness, and debauchery, that the poor African is held in bondage!!¹

1. Ibid., p. 31.

Ogden reflects other now familiar patterns. He, like his predecessors in this series of autobiographers, identified commercial prosperity with the will of providence.

... fine cultivated fields and rising settlements charm the eye of the beholder amidst the boundless prospects of desolated wilds. Where we shall see the lands cleared of those enormous trees with which it is now overgrown, and the cliffs and quarries converted into materials for building, we cannot help dwelling on the industry and art of man, which by the dint of toil and perseverance can change the desert into a fruitful field, and shape the rough stone to use and elegance. When the solitary waste is peopled, and convenient habitations arise amidst the former retreats of wild beasts; when the silence of nature is succeeded by the buzz of employment, the congratulations of society, and the voice of joy; in fine, when we shall behold competence and plenty springing from the bosom of dreary forest - what a lesson is offered us of the benevolent intentions of Providence! ¹

Also, in Ogden's eyes, the aesthetically pleasing was inseparable from the materially useful.

Below this town [Shippingport], for fifty miles, the river is truly beautiful. Some of the Planters in this vicinity sow five hundred acres with wheat, set thirty ploughs a going in one field, keep eighty or ninety horses, several hundred negroes, and carry on distilling, coopering, shoe-making, and other trades. ²

The work of George W. Ogden closes this chapter which has been devoted to a survey of the first seventy-five years of Kentucky autobiography. Certain conclusions relevant to the thesis objectives stated in the first paragraph of Chapter One may be drawn.

1. Ibid., p. 39.

2. Ibid., p. 42.

First, from the point of view of literary criticism, the seven works discussed herein, as has been demonstrated, bear some similarities to each other or, perhaps more vividly expressed, show a relationship with change. The works of Gist, Walker, and the elder and younger Michaux are stylistically primitive travel-adventure narratives. The more imaginative works of Filson and Ogden form the middle ground in the tendency toward a genuine autobiographical literature, a trend which rises abruptly to the achievement of Timothy Flint's Recollections of the Last Ten Years.¹

Second, on the level of cultural history, the testimony implicit in these seven works forms a bond among them more consistent than the literary correlation just drawn. It has been shown by quotation and analysis that all of these works included in some manner the four subjects of violence, religion, commerce, and migration. It is true that the proportion among these subjects or their total proportion to other subject matter contained in these works varies and that at the extreme, in Timothy Flint's autobiography, these topics do not dominate the work. Yet, to offset this concession, attention may be drawn to the great strength of certain aspects of the generalization. For example, taking the single factor of movement, every one of these seven works is the story of a traveler in Kentucky. And finally, to anticipate for a moment, the success with which this basic proposition can be extended through time to embrace satisfactorily other Kentucky autobiography up to the work of Jesse Stuart in this era is the most logical argument for its usefulness.

What conclusions about Kentucky culture or Kentucky life in general may be drawn from the evidence thus far presented? As was noted in Chapter

1. Flint, Timothy, Op. cit.

One, autobiography is only one fragment of the cultural documents left from earlier times and for a broadly significant statement, other kinds of literature and other art forms such as music and painting would have to be considered. Furthermore, it is too early in this study of autobiography to venture extensive deduction. Certainly, however, this much may be said, that the works thus far considered point like an arrow to the idea that early life in Kentucky was unsettled, that violence was a common experience, and that religion as a consolation, and economic advantage as an incentive, these last two interacting subtly, were prominent in the conduct of the people. As Professor Wilbur J. Cash has said in his book The Mind of the South: "The history of ... the South throughout a very great part of the period from the opening of the nineteenth century to the Civil War ... is mainly the history of the roll of frontier upon frontier- and on to the frontier beyond." ¹

1. Cash, Wilbur J., The Mind of the South, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1941.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONFESSION AUTOBIOGRAPHY. ITS EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN KENTUCKY LITERATURE

Confession autobiography in Kentucky literature possesses an interest and value greater than its small volume would indicate. These works are interesting because they represent a change from the impersonal, factual records of the last chapter to the intimate disclosures of men in a situation of conflict; and it is the aspect of conflict in human experience that is basic to fictional literature. The works are valuable because they reveal the kinds of conflict which troubled men in an earlier society.

The three confession autobiographies to be discussed in this chapter, which, altogether, do not bulk as large as do many individual works considered elsewhere in this thesis, maintain a high excellence, although the qualities for which they are distinguished vary with each work.

The confession autobiography is introduced at this point because it is conveniently suited to the evolution of the subject while, at the same time, preserving the continuity. First, this form retains the chronological relationship. It begins in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, where the preceding chapter closed, and bridges the interval into the post Civil War era, where the next chapter takes up. Even more important, the confession autobiography conserves the conceptual integrity of the thesis for

it interlocks thematically, in its earliest appearance, with the simple cultural pattern illustrated in Chapter Two, and coincides, in its last development with the intellectual autobiography of the post-bellum period which will be discussed in Chapter Four.

It would be unwarranted to infer from so meagre evidence as is furnished by the three documents collected in this chapter that any widespread social change in Kentucky gave rise to their composition. Indeed, the possibility must be considered that so strange a work as the Confession of Jereboam O. Beauchamp, one of the autobiographies to be taken up in this section, is simply a literary aberration which might appear under any conditions. Yet it would be to neglect a most provocative and striking development if this appearance of confession autobiography were allowed to pass without a conjecture of its meaning. For however tenuous the strain may be, nevertheless it is there. That it represents an emergence above the simple travel-adventure autobiography preceding it is clear from the reasons advanced in the first paragraph of this chapter. Does it have any significance beyond this literary one? In answer, this much may be said: a change in literature frequently accompanies a change in society; the appearance of confession, however rude, suggests the dawning of social consciousness for it arises from a need to explain behavior which departs from some norm. Furthermore, in that it is an intellectual, rather than a physical recourse, the confession argues for some complexity in social relations relatively greater than those of an earlier time.

Probably the first example of the confession literature to appear was the Life and Travels of John Robert Shaw,¹ printed in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1806. Mr. Shaw's autobiography may be thought of as a transition piece because this work combines the basic travel-adventure autobiographical type with an embryonic confession. Regrettably, very little of Mr. Shaw's life was actually spent in Kentucky. He was born in England and was sent to the American Colonies as a British soldier to fight in the Revolutionary War. After deserting from the British Army, he wandered as an itinerant worker and soldier of fortune for many years in the eastern states before migrating westward. For this reason his autobiography, although written and published in Lexington, is not, by precise definition, a Kentucky example; consequently, less emphasis will be given to this work in the discussion than to the other two confessions. However, to such parts of Mr. Shaw's narrative as help to reveal the characteristics of confession autobiography as a literary type without depending too heavily on his experiences outside Kentucky some attention will be given.

The stimulus of Mr. Shaw's confession appears to have been a religious one, for he describes his misdeeds as violations of divine rather than civil law. Moreover, the confession has a propitiatory tone as though it were intended to redress by its humility the errors of the writer. In the later years of his life Mr. Shaw, who drank heavily, began to have frightening visions which he interpreted as

1. Shaw, John Robert, The Life and Travels of John Robert Shaw, Louisville, Kentucky, George L. Fowler, 1930.

prophetic warnings. As a result of these experiences he tried to amend his conduct and as a part of this program of reform, he wrote the autobiography that it might serve as a warning to others. A description of the visions and his interpretation of them as religious experiences appears in the following passages.

I walked along intending to take up my quarters that night in a friend's house, but growing weary and sick, I lay down in the woods, and shortly fell asleep, continuing so until midnight, when being awakened by a noise which I could not account for, I jumped up rather amazed, and within nine or ten feet of me saw a ball of fire, apparently as large as a bushel, and at the same time heard a voice over my head, crying Shaw! Shaw! will you not speak to me?...

- I rose and began to pray fervently, in which posture I did not long continue before these gloomy visions totally vanished.¹

The author regarded these appearances as omens in a struggle of good against evil.

... I imagined I beheld rising at the end of the table, a head like that of a man's and eyes like two balls of fire, glaring me full in the face. My astonishment at the horrid sight can better be imagined than expressed. However, I summoned fortitude enough to say begone Satan or I'll shoot you with the word of God; when immediately it disappeared, leaving behind a smoke similar to that which is produced by sulphur, which induced me to think it was the Devil, and consequently no hopes for me.²

Mr. Shaw describes the reflections which transformed his conduct and ultimately led to the composition of his confession. It is interesting to observe that he lists carelessness in financial matters among his serious misdeeds; that he expresses in religious terms his

1. Ibid., p. 171.

2. Ibid., p. 174.

resolve to reform; and that he regards sobriety as among the most essential conditions of his rehabilitation.

I now began to take a retrospect of my past life, considering maturely the sums of money and the precious time which I had mispent; therefore resolved with the assistance of Divine Providence to amend my conduct, and be circum-spect in my future deportment; as a prelude to which I commenced bar-keeping for my landlord, Gabl. Poindexter, during the continuance of which no solicitations whatever could induce me to violate the bounds of sobriety.¹

The preceding passages give the background of experience and then reflection which led to the writing of the Life and Travels of John Robert Shaw. In the opening passages of the book, the author himself gives an explanation of the motives and the spirit which led to its creation. The contrite and humble phrasing distinguishes this work, which is a gesture of repentance, from those of the other two authors to be considered in this chapter who wrote to justify their behavior and defy society.

The greater part of my past life (with regret I speak it) has been little else than a series of errors and follies, and consequent misfortunes; and some no doubt, of my friends, as well as enemies, will be disposed to look upon the publication of this narrative, as one of the greatest errors in the whole catalogue.
...²

In his introductory chapter, which is quaintly entitled "An address to the Public," Mr. Shaw confirms the fact that the work is a confession. His attitude toward the autobiography reverses that one adopted by Benjamin Franklin in his memoirs, for the latter wrote the

1. Ibid., p. 182.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

story of his life to serve as a good example to his readers, whereas Mr. Shaw recounts his experiences as a warning that other may avoid his errors.

The principal object, however, I had in view in compiling my narrative, was to deliver, in plain and intelligible language, a true and faithful detail of the various incidents, vicissitudes and errors of my life; and this I flatter myself I have in some measure attained. ¹

It is in the conclusion of Shaw's work that one finds the strongest parallel to Franklin's autobiography; for with his reformation successful in his own eyes and with the acquisition of considerable property resulting from his new attentiveness to practical concerns, the author is prompted to conclude his narrative in a materialistic vein admonishing his readers to the virtues of industry and piety.

I will now take leave of my candid reader, if any reader should have patience to accompany me so far; by endeavouring to warn those who are entering into life (and to them my admonitions are chiefly addressed) against those follies and various vices, which are laid down in the preceding pages, and which the author was (through the various vicissitudes of life which he has experienced, unavoidably, or rather intuitively) led into, from the strong propensity of his nature, to that depravity which is always indigenous to us frail mortals. ²

The author continues:

Through all the career of my folly, vice and intemperance, I made it a point never to lose sight of industry; from which

1. Ibid., p. 16.

2. Ibid., p. 205.

source I now derive my present advantages in pecuniary concerns; with the pleasing prospect of ample support for myself and family, during the residue of my declining years. Therefore, I shall begin with recommending industry to my youthful readers, which is the law of our being; it is the demand of nature, of reason and of God.¹

Two corollary points remain to be made in connection with Mr. Shaw's autobiography. One is an interesting detail of style. The title page of the work is inscribed with a moralizing stanza presumably composed by Mr. Shaw.

"He that once sins, like him that slides on ice,
"Goes swiftly down the slippery ways of vice;-
"But happy he, who with prudent care,
"Retreats betimes from the fallacious snare." 2

Finally, it has been mentioned that those events recorded in this autobiography which occurred outside Kentucky would not be admitted as evidence in this thesis; however, to give some indication that this narrative is rooted in the same simple level of experience as the travel-adventure autobiographies discussed in the preceding chapter, the following brief summary of the contents of the work which appeared as an advertisement in the Kentucky Gazette for November 27, 1806, will be entered here. The reader is promised a story of violence and travel.

'In a few months I [John Robert Shaw]
shall present to the public a narrative of
thirty years of my life and travels, five
different times a soldier, three times ship-
wrecked, twelve months a prisoner of war,

-
1. Ibid., p. 205.
 2. Ibid., title page.

and four times blown up.' 1

The most fascinating personal narrative in Kentucky autobiography is the melodramatic Confession of Jereboam O. Beauchamp. 2 The florid prose style and the improbable, essentially chivalrous motivation of events which characterize this work and which together suggest a romantic novel combine strangely with the author's passionate intensity and the tragic nature of the occurrence which he describes. Within one year Beauchamp's life became the centerpoint of a network of misfortune which embraced such serious forms of violence and misconduct as seduction, duelling, murder, execution, and suicide.

Beauchamp's story is so intricate that a short synopsis of the main events is necessary in order to clarify the quotations which will be used herein.

The author was born about the beginning of the nineteenth century on a farm near Bowling Green, Kentucky. As a young man he received a rude education from an itinerant schoolmaster, and about 1824 he went to Bowling Green to study law. While there he learned that a girl, Ann Cook, whom he did not know, had been seduced by a lawyer named Colonel Sharp, whom Beauchamp knew and liked, although his acquaintance was very slight. Moved by the injustice done Miss Cook, Beauchamp determined to interfere in the situation. He began by calling on Ann Cook, a procedure which led ultimately to their marriage. Miss Cook exacted from her husband a wedding pledge that he would kill Colonel Sharp, preferably in a duel, a project which the author had resolved to perform even before

1. Ibid., p. 11.

2. Beauchamp, Jereboam O., The Confession of Jereboam O. Beauchamp, New York, N. Y., Dinsmore and Co., 1858.

she mentioned it. Colonel Sharp declined Beauchamp's challenge to fight, but to no avail; one night the author went to the Colonel's house and stabbed him to death. Beauchamp was arrested, tried, and sentenced to hang. While in jail he wrote the defiant Confession of Jereboam O. Beauchamp. Mrs. Beauchamp (the former Ann Cook) stayed with her husband in jail where the two plotted a suicide pact which resulted in the former's death. Her husband survived the poison but was hanged a short time later.

In a curt, defiant prologue the author begins his confession.

I die for pursuing, what the dictates of my clearest and most deliberate judgement had determined it was at least justifiable in me to do, if not my duty to do: and for which, no guilty pang of conscience, has ever yet reproved me, or, the certain prospect of death, made me feel the least regret. ¹

The author enumerates the reasons which he felt to justify his murder of Colonel Sharp. Conspicuous among them is the theme of righteous vengeance.

It will teach a certain class of 'heroes,' who make their glory to consist in triumphs over the virtue and happiness of worthy unfortunate orphan females to pause sometimes in their mad career and reflect, that though the deluded victim of their villany, may have no father to protect or revenge her, yet some friendly arm may sooner or later be nerved by her, to avenge her blighted prospects. ²

In spite of the highly personal and recklessly individualistic tone of both the confession and the behavior which is confessed, the fact remains that a sense of social awareness and responsibility manifests itself in this document.

1. Ibid., preface.

2. Loc. cit.

To justify myself before my country, and for the satisfaction of my family, who feel dishonored by my condemnation, I shall submit to the world, a plain unreserved narrative, of the motives and causes which led me to become an assassin. ¹

In the first paragraph of the confession the author sets up the conditions of a simple, frontier environment.

I am the second son of a most worthy and respectable farmer. ... the early part of my education, which generally has a lasting impression on the bent of my mind, was of a most pious and salutary kind. I was much a favorite with my fond father, although of a most wild, eccentric and ungovernable temper of mind. ²

As the author turns to an explanation of how he first came to be involved in the situation which concerned only Miss Cook and Colonel Sharp, he betrays that, despite his previous assertion that the murder of Colonel Sharp was determined by " ... my clearest and most deliberate judgement...", " it was actually a highly emotional impulse which led to the tragedy.

I was attracted by a general burst of generous indignation amongst them [the lawyers at Bowling Green] Toward Colonel Solomon P. Sharp, of the bar from Bowling Green, for the seduction of Miss Ann Cook of that place. Now I was not personally acquainted with Miss Cook. ... But there was a young gentleman from Bowling Green, at that time a room-mate and bosom friend of mine, who had been intimately acquainted with Miss Cook, and much devoted to her.

Hearing the high account which he gave of her character ... much inflamed the indignation ... which had been caught and kindled in my bosom ...

My friend held Colonel Sharp in utter con-

1. Ibid., p. 2.

2. Ibid., p. 6.

tempt and abhorrence, and from him I imbibed somewhat of my personal dislike, in-so-much, that I felt a disinclination to enter into even those cordial salutations of friendship, which had heretofore characterized our intercourse. ...

It may seem strange, that I should have been so easily infected with dislike, towards one I had here to fore admired; merely, by the tale of his dishonor toward a female, to whom I was an utter stranger. But such was the enthusiasm of all my passions, that when I had a bosom friend, all of his partialities were my partialities, all of his antipathies mine. Besides, this was a species of dishonor, which, from my earliest recollections, had ever excited my most violent reprobation. I had ever said, I would as soon receive into my friendship, an horse thief, as a man however high his standing, who had dishonoured and prostrated the hopes of a respected and worthy female. And I still say, there is more intrinsic dishonor and baseness in it, than in stealing a man's horse; and should be received with less forgiveness, or countenance, by society.¹

Beauchamp set himself the objective of becoming acquainted with Miss Cook and the familiarity which followed his introduction to her, as has already been indicated, led to their marriage. Miss Cook shared the ethical attitudes of her husband and this fatal blend of personalities precipitated the final tragedy.

... Miss Cook told me, with a firmness, which spoke that it was the voice of fate, that the hand which should receive hers, would have to revenge the injury a villain had done her. She said her heart could never cease to ache, till Colonel Sharp should die through her instrumentality

No conditions, nor any earthly proposition she could have made me could have filled me with so much delight. Whenever I had contemplated

1. Ibid., pp. 6-8.

a marriage with her, I had always esteemed the death of Colonel Sharp a necessary consequence. I never for a moment could feel that I could suffer a villain to live, who had been a seducer of one I pressed to my bosom as a wife.¹

The author and Miss Cook perfected their plans for the killing of Colonel Sharp. They invoked the assistance of Providence for the project, and used words and gestures sometimes associated with medieval chivalry. Note the use of the word shield in this passage:

When I took leave of Miss Cook [to kill Sharp] ... She burst into tears at parting and invoked the protecting arm of Heaven to be my defense and my shield.²

Jereboam Beauchamp reports his interview with his intended victim in great detail. The following dialogue is representative of a much longer passage. Observe the melodramatic, theatrical quality of the language.

'Colonel Sharp,' said I, 'I have come deputed and sent by her, to take your life. I am the man of whom, in the spirit of prophecy, she spoke to you, when she forbade you her presence. She says you will not fight me, Will you sir, or not?' He paused some minutes motionless. I continued: 'Answer me Colonel Sharp! Will you fight me a duel?' He replied, 'my dear friend I cannot fight you on account of Miss Cook.'³

When the attempt to compel Colonel Sharp to engage in a duel failed, the conspirators cast about for a new plan. Miss Cook proposed that Colonel Sharp be invited to a rendezvous with her where

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1. Ibid., p. 19.
 2. Ibid., p. 14.
 3. Ibid., p. 15.

she might shoot him herself. This technique was tried but Colonel Sharp refused the invitation. The author who had become exasperated with the delay, finally went to the Colonel's house, as was reported in the synopsis, and stabbed him to death, an act which was accompanied by further dramatic monologue similar to that in the last quotation given here. When Beauchamp returned home, the ceremonious reception prepared by Miss Cook and his own reciprocal gestures again suggest the behavior of a medieval knight returning to his princess. Notice the description of a flag ceremony.

She was walking down the grove, upon the road I was to come, anxiously expecting my arrival. So soon as I saw her thus alone, I hoisted my flag of victory. She ran to meet me, and as I alit from my horse I gave her the flag, and she fell prostrate on her face before me. She then burst into tears and lifted her voice in gratitude to heaven, that she was revenged for all the misery a villian had brought upon her family.¹

The autobiography of Jereboam O. Beauchamp is an important document for the purposes of this thesis. It is the arch-type of the ruthless and passionate violence which figures so largely in Kentucky autobiography. But it illustrates even more than this for it is an evolutionary link. Beauchamp did not succeed in working out his destiny in a purely individualistic way on the plane of action. Instead he was brought to account and punished by society. This social frustration of his physical activities forced him into an intellectual exercise, the creation of an explanatory, confession autobiography.

1. Ibid., p. 47.

This occurrence points the way for the next major phase in Kentucky autobiography.

It has been said herein that the confession autobiography in Kentucky literature is uniformly well written. Further evidence to justify this claim is the highly interesting work by John Culleton, Ten Years A Priest; an Open Confession.¹ Regrettably, a great part of this book is not suited to use in this thesis; for as the author explains in the passage given below, the book was compiled as a defensive measure after he withdrew from the Catholic Church.

It [the autobiography] might never have been written, were it not for the unfortunate Roman Catholic habit of pursuing with slander, regardless of facts and their own former good opinion, every man who changes his mind about the infallible claims of the Roman Church and has the courage to act as his reason dictates. No man ever went out of a church more quietly than I did, or with less reason to fear or expect the poisoned darts of calumny. But I could not escape them, and was compelled in self-defense to load my sling with a little pebble of truth and try the effect of a face blow on the cantankerous old Philistine that claims the earth.²

As a consequence of the intention expressed above, much of the space is devoted to testimonial articles and letters praising the author's integrity, a condition which gives the work the semblance of a legal brief. Nevertheless, interspersed with the articles of defense is a lively recital of an event of some cultural importance- the story

1. Culleton, John, Ten Years a Priest; an Open Confession, Louisville, Ky., published by the author, 1893.

2. Ibid., p. 3.

of an intellectual conflict involving an aspect of human experience which has heretofore appeared in Kentucky autobiography as an accepted and unquestioned domain, namely religion. A detail, probably of small significance but at least worth noting, is that Culleton, the only one of the authors treated in this thesis who made a sharp break with his cultural heritage, is one of the few of these writers who spent his early years in a relatively large urban community.

I was born in Louisville, Kentucky, on Sunday August 1, 1858. My parents, William Culleton and Catherine Murphy, were natives of Ireland and pious Catholics.¹

Although John Culleton's parents moved from Louisville to Bowling Green, Kentucky, when he was eight years old, he speaks of his new home which was in a hotel as a stimulating environment.

As a boy I was older than my years. Brought up in a hotel, my associates at home were nearly all men, and I early acquired a fondness for the society and conversation of those older than myself, and fell into their ways of thinking and speaking to such an extent that at twelve I was called 'the old man.'

Among our boarders were some who had seen a great deal of the world, some well-educated and possessed of books, some fond of talking religion and politics. From the age of eight, when I was already a constant reader of the daily papers, my surroundings greatly stimulated a natural thirst for knowledge and led to the acquirement of literary tastes very advanced for one of my years. ... I became quite skillful at cards and checkers, a profound discourser

1. Ibid., p. 5.

of politics, a student of works of religious controversy, and well up in Byron, Dickens, Shakespeare, and the Bible.¹

When the author reached young manhood, he decided to become a priest. Seemingly, however, he found the intellectual adjustment to this profession a difficult one. The reader finds such criticisms as the following which describe the author's thinking at a time when he was still devoted to Catholicism.

Catholic schools have some rules that must have been evolved from the very protoplasm of insanity. One of the seminary rules forbade the reading of any newspapers, and even the Catholic weeklies were very unjustly included under that name. Just think of turning loose on the world a lot of young men loaded to the muzzle with theology and brimstone and infallibility, but without the least notion of what humanity had been about during the last three years! I broke this rule from the very start, smuggling in regularly the *Courier-Journal* and *Puck*. ... Another rule forbade the use of tobacco, and while I was at the seminary one of the best and most talented of the Bishop's students got into trouble and failed of becoming a priest through the violation of this rule. Another forbade any indulgence in intoxicating drinks. Both rules were pretty generally and wisely broken, for many a sad experience had demonstrated the folly of enforcing for several years a total abstinence from things whose abuse only is sinful, and then sending out the young priest untried- and therefore ignorant of himself- to associate with older priests long accustomed to console themselves for the unnatural loneliness of celibacy with the jolly companionship of the pipe and bottle.²

1. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

Mr. Culleton was critical of more fundamental observances than those mentioned by him above. He describes his reaction to the religious retreat.

A week's retreat strictly carried out- and sometimes they last a month- is a tremendous strain on the mind. I shall never forget the effect of my first retreat at the seminary. I went through all the exercises with the utmost exactness, and was on the verge of lunacy by the time it was over. That one experience, followed by cooler participation in several other retreats and study of their after effects on myself and others, thoroughly convinced me that 'spiritual retreats' do more harm than good... those who enter fully into the spirit of the retreat come out of it in a state bordering on frenzy, which leaves a lasting and very harmful impress on weak minds. ¹

The incipient rebellion evident in such a criticism as the preceding one ultimately led to the author's withdrawal from the church. Apparently no single episode precipitated his decision which, rather, simply evolved out of his intellectual growth; however, one important conflict contributing to his renunciation of Catholicism, to judge from the lengthy treatment given it in the autobiography, was Mr. Culleton's acceptance of certain nineteenth century political ideas which were not supported by the Roman Church.

During my last year as pastor of Franklin occurred the suspension of Dr. Edward McGlynn by the Archbishop of New York for preaching the single-tax doctrine of Henry George, and his excommunication by the Pope for his refusal to retract and to obey the Papal

1. Ibid., p. 19.

summons to Rome. I had had Henry George's book "Progress and Poverty" for some time, but had not more than glanced at it till my interest in the subject was aroused by the case of McGlynn. When I did read it, in a spirit of criticism and hostility, I felt a victim to the writer's irresistible logic, and have ever since remained a firm believer in the single-tax theory.¹

The author did not hide his intellectual convictions even though he was still within the church.

... the two following communications to Henry George's paper (the New York Standard), written about the same time, show in what direction my mind was traveling as far back as 1887, and that I did not conceal my true sentiments about some things ecclesiastical, although I had not at the time the faintest foregleam of the ultimate outcome.

'Inclosed find a year's subscription to The Standard. It is refreshing to find a paper that dares give utterance to the truth. Your manly defense of your friend Dr. McGlynn in his undeserved trouble may provoke the disinterested criticism of the aristocratic secular press of New York and of a religious press that, with a few bright exceptions, is religiously careful not to say what it thinks on certain subjects; but with men all over the country, and among priests especially, it will make you friends. Dr. McGlynn is not the only priest who believes in the doctrine of Henry George concerning property in land; and many of us think that in a free country a priest should not be deprived by his priestly character of his rights as a citizen, and forbidden to give public expression to his opinions on political or economic questions because "his lordship" or

1. Ibid., p. 44.

"his grace" or an Italian cardinal ... happens to think differently. ...

The McGlynn case is but a new illustration of an old trick in church diplomacy. When a man whose life can be blighted by ecclesiastical censures teaches a doctrine offensive to the rulers of the church, which doctrine cannot easily (or at all) shown to be false, they punish the individual, but leave the truth or falsity of his teaching an open question. They thus crush the poor fellow who thought he was doing right, intimidate others who may be inclined to think like him, impede progress with the whole weight of church authority, and yet shirk the only duty that was really incumbent on them- that of deciding authoritatively whether or not the doctrine in question is heretical.' ¹

In addition to such issues of principle, John Culleton records many petty irritations which were of a purely personal nature. The sum of these dissatisfactions eventuated in his resignation from the church, an act which, according to himself, was performed quietly and which is not described in any detail in the autobiography. His behavior precipitated a controversy which he conducted, on his part, by public addresses in Louisville and by publication of his "confession."

A noteworthy detail of style in Culleton's work is his use of satire which helps to enliven what might have been a bleak and humorless narrative.

I have always found autobiography interesting even when commonplace, and I trust this little book, whatever else be thought of it, will not be considered commonplace. ²

1. Ibid., pp. 46-47.

2. Ibid., p. 3.

This discussion of Ten Years a Priest; an Open Confession concludes Chapter Three, which has been devoted to the confession autobiography. In these three works is apparent an increasing intellectualization and a decreasing emphasis on physical modes of behavior. The last of the autobiographies, that of John E. Culleton, brings the discussion within the chronological and conceptual environs of the next topic- the intellectual autobiography.

CHAPTER FOUR

INTELLECTUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN KENTUCKY LITERATURE

In anticipation of the evidence to be submitted in this chapter, a general statement of the major ideas which will appear is desirable. The first problem is that of defining terms. The word "intellectual" in the term "intellectual autobiography" is inexact and the kind of writing meant by this title can be described but not precisely defined. The description includes three parts: one is chronological; that is, intellectual autobiography may be identified, in part, by the time at which it begins; secondly, this style of autobiography is related to the general level of social and cultural development in terms of the occupations of the people who write it; and finally, intellectual autobiography is roughly characterized by the subject matter of the works themselves, works which are a record of ideas rather than things; which deal with interpretations of life rather than descriptions of events occurring in life.

In applying these three criteria to Kentucky autobiography, one finds, first, that intellectual autobiography appears in Kentucky literature about the time of the Civil War and occurs with increasing frequency and with increasing quality into this era. As has been suggested by the autobiographies so far reviewed herein as well as by reference to the work of Professor Cash, the South, prior to the Civil War, was largely in the frontier stage and the harsh physical inconveniences of that environment led to a preoccupation among autobiographers with the primitive problems of migration, violence, religion, and commerce. After the Civil War the increasing complexity of the social and economic structure began to afford

a place for people who worked with their minds rather than their bodies and even supported a group whose thinking was not devoted to the practical ends of business but who were, rather, philosophers and social theoreticians- editors, journalists, novelists, poets. This social development in Kentucky corresponds to the second general condition for intellectual autobiography mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

In addition to the pre-conditions of a favorable time historically and to the appearance in society of intellectual workers, a third standard has been set for the kind of writing which can be called intellectual autobiography and that is autobiography which is an interpretation of life rather than an inventory of events. In practice, or at least in this thesis, the latter condition can be regarded only as an ideal exemplified¹ in American literature by the famous Education of Henry Adams. For the fact that a person is a professional thinker and writer is no guarantee that his autobiography will be more profound than anyone else's and thus the compromise has been made herein that those memoirs which record a life predominantly devoted to contemplation and creation rather than to other activity shall be classified as intellectual autobiography.

The intellectual autobiography produced in Kentucky is consistent enough to support some generalization. By and large, the five authors considered in this discussion recognize, indeed are forced by the conditions of nineteenth and twentieth century life to take into account the major problems of this era, the crises of industrialism, world war,

1. Adams, Henry, The Education of Henry Adams, New York, The Modern Library, 1931.

depression, widespread poverty, and the urgent philosophical and social questions arising from them. To the task of evaluating such contemporary issues, however, these several writers brought minds which were steeped in the emotional, romantic heritage of the earlier agrarian environment, or the remains thereof, which has already been pictured in this thesis. They appear to have attempted to resolve distinctly new problems with traditional ways of thinking. This method of approach seemingly obscured the subtlety of modern social organization from these writers and concealed from them the need for a systematized philosophy so that the convictions of each individual, at least as they are shown in the autobiographies, frequently reduce to serious contradictions.

The first work to be taken up in this chapter is the autobiography Marse Henry¹ by the famous editor of the Louisville Courier Journal, Henry Watterson, a man whose reputation as a scholar, author, and political theorist has achieved the proportions of a legend in Kentucky history. From the evidence of the several autobiographies by Kentucky intellectuals these people were almost all well known to each other and no one is so frequently or so respectfully referred to by the others as is Henry Watterson. Alice Hegan Rice, Cale Young Rice, and Irvin S. Cobb all mention Watterson in their autobiographies. Mrs. Rice's comments are typical and some excerpts presented here from her autobiography The Inky Way² speak representatively for all the others. Mrs. Rice includes in her work a poem which she wrote in tribute to Mr. Watterson. It is reproduced here with her

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1. Watterson, Henry, Marse Henry, New York, The George H. Doran Co., 1919.
 2. Rice, Alice Hegan, The Inky Way, New York, D. Appleton - Century Co., 1940.

comments.

On one of Colonel Watterson's birthdays the Courier Journal published a Henry Watterson edition, and in my files are the verses I contributed:

Who is the happy Editor, who is he?
 That every pen in praise should lifted be?
 He is the doughty spirit, who for years
 Has stirred the nation up with hopes and fears.
 He is the giant conjuror who plays
 At capturing current history with a phrase.
 He is the world-renowned cosmopolite
 At home in every clime that one may cite,
 In London or in Paris or Madrid
 Or off in Monte Carlo safely hid.
 Savant he is with any Oxford don,
 He plays with Tartarin in Tarascon,
 He walks with Dr. Johnson in the Strand;
 He merry makes with any strolling band.
 He is the kindred soul of every art
 Of music, letters, drama he's a part.
 In fact, he is "Marse Henry" when all's said.
 May blessings always gather round his head! ¹

Henry Watterson's autobiography does not measure up to the intellectual standards which the praise of his admirers leads the reader to expect. The explanation of this discrepancy is easily evident and works to the defense of the editor. Such people as the Rices commented on the basis of a personal relationship with the man, a source of information about him which it is now beyond possibility to subject to critical analysis. Moreover, Marse Henry was written when Watterson was almost eighty years old, an age at which his power had almost certainly begun to fail, and, consequently, the autobiography alone cannot provide a fair appraisal even of his written work. However, with these reservations, Marse Henry is an interesting and instructive piece in the autobiographical record of

1. Ibid., p. 104.

Kentucky.

Henry Watterson begins recounting his life story by detailing the influences which moulded his childhood. His youth was spent in the relatively sophisticated environment of Washington, D. C., and he associated freely with prominent, national, political figures. Yet his thinking, as he acknowledges, was always conditioned by the primitive Tennessee environment in which he and his family had their origins. The typical emotional religion of the frontier became an immutable preconception in his consideration of the intellectual problems of his time.

It was not, however, his [Watterson's father] ambitions [political] or his career that interested me -- that is, not until I was well into my teens -- but the camp meetings and the revivalist preachers delivering the Word of God with more or less of ignorant yet often of very eloquent fervor.

... The revival was a religious hysteria lasting ten days or two weeks. The sermons were appeals to the emotions. The songs were the outpourings of the soul in ecstasy. ...

Inevitably an impressionable and imaginative mind opening to such sights and sounds as it emerged from infancy must have been deeply affected. Until I was twelve years old the enchantment of religion had complete possession of my understanding. With the loudest, I could sing all the hymns. ... To this day I can repeat the most of them -- though not without a break of voice -- while too much dwelling upon them would stir me to a pitch of feeling which a ... self control I have been always able to command would scarcely suffice to restrain.

The truth is that I retain the spiritual essentials I learned then and there. I have never had the young man's period of disbelief.¹

The first important crisis in which Henry Watterson became involved

1. Watterson, Henry, Op. cit., p. 20.

was the Civil War, which occurred when he was still a young man. The record of his thinking in dealing with that situation contains a basic contradiction.

It is truth to say that I cannot recall the time when I was not passionately opposed to slavery, a crank on the subject of personal liberty, if I am a crank about anything.¹

I had been an undoubting Union boy. Neither then [before secession] nor afterward could I be fairly classified as a Secessionist. Circumstances rather than conviction or predilection threw me into the Confederate service, and, being in, I went through with it. ... in my small way I had done my best for the Union and against secession.²

... On reaching home [Tennessee] I found myself alone. The boys were all gone to the front. The girls were -- well, they were all crazy. My native country was about to be invaded. Propinquity. Sympathy. So, casting opinions to the winds in I went on feeling. And that is how I became a rebel ... I soon got to be a pretty good rebel and went the limit, changing my coat as it were, though not my better judgement, for with a gray jacket on my back and ready to do or die, I retained my belief that secession was treason, that disunion was the height of folly and that the South was bound to go down in the unequal strife.³

With a philosophical adjustment which permitted him such a separation of belief and behavior, it is understandable to find Watterson eventually repudiating his confidence in human intellect. The uncertainty to which

1. Ibid., p. 28.

2. Ibid., p. 79.

3. Ibid., p. 82..

the paradoxes in his thinking thus reduced him, is not peculiar to Mr. Watterson alone, but, as will be seen, is a characteristic outcome of many Kentucky intellectuals, notably Jesse Stuart.¹

Mr. Watterson chooses the despair of Hamlet as the analogue of his own bewilderment.

'Words, words, words,' says Hamlet. Even as veteran writers for the press have come through disheartening experience to a realizing sense of the futility of printer's ink must our academic pundits begin to suspect the futility of arts and letters. Words however cleverly writ on paper are after all but words.²

The problems of an increasingly mechanized and urbanized, industrial civilization were a challenge under whose weight Watterson confessed his confusion.

The miracles of electricity the last word of science, what is left for man to do? With wireless telegraphy, the airplane and the automobile annihilating time and space, what else? Turning from the material to the ethical it seems of the very nature of the human species to meddle and muddle.³

It has been said that, ideally, in intellectual autobiography the subject matter is a record of ideas rather than events as in The Education of Henry Adams; but that in Kentucky intellectual autobiography the emphasis on ideas is less constant and sometimes gives way to a recital of events. The following passage from Marse Henry is an example of such a case in which the author concentrates on the matter-of-fact details of an episode which, if he had given greater attention to ideas, could have enormously enhanced the value of the description and increased the appreciation of his reader.

1. Analysis of Jesse Stuart's intellectual rebellion will be presented in Chapter Six.

2. Watterson, Henry, Op. cit., p. 72.

3. Ibid., p. 73.

Under the title "I GO TO LONDON -- AM INTRODUCED TO A NOTABLE SET -- HUXLEY, SPENCER, MILL, AND TYNDALL ..." ¹ Watterson presents the following report. The passage is quoted in full.

Not long after we began our sojourn in London, I recurred -- by chance, I am ashamed to say -- to Mrs. Scott's [an acquaintance in Atlanta, Georgia] letter of introduction to her brother. The address read 'Mr. Thomas H. Huxley, School of Mines, Jermyn Street.' Why, it was but two or three blocks away, and being so near I called, not knowing just who Mr. Thomas H. Huxley might be.

I was conducted to a dark, stuffy little room. The gentleman who met me was exceedingly handsome and very agreeable. He greeted me cordially and we had some talk about his relatives in America. Of course my wife and I were invited at once to dinner. I was a little perplexed. There was no one to tell me about Huxley, or in what way he might be connected with the School of Mines.

It was a good dinner. There sat at table a gentleman by the name of Tyndall and another by the name of Mill -- of neither I had ever heard -- but there was still another of the name of Spencer, whom I fancied must be a literary man, for I recalled having reviewed a clever book on Education some four years ago by a writer of that name; a certain Herbert Spencer, whom I rightly judged might be he.

The dinner, I repeat, was a very good dinner indeed -- the Huxleys, I took it, must be well to do -- the company agreeable; a bit pragmatic, however, I thought. The gentleman by the name of Spencer said he loved music and wished to hear Mrs. Watterson sing, especially Longfellow's Rainy Day, and left the others of us -- Huxley, Mill, Tyndall, and myself -- at table. Finding them a little off on the Irish question

1. Ibid., p. 97.

as well as American affairs, I set them right as to both with much particularity and a great deal of satisfaction to myself.

Whatever Huxley's occupation, it turned out that he had at least one book-publishing acquaintance, Mr. Alexander Macmillan, to whom he introduced me next day... .¹

It has been mentioned that Watterson was respected for the role he played in politics and national affairs. In this regard it is significant to observe, particularly from the perspective of our own time, the stand which he took on the issue of suffrage for women. When the author's declaration on the subject of personal liberty, already quoted herein, is recalled, his opposition to the suffrage movement seems inconsistent. His argument is rhetorical:

... the world can never be too kind to its women -- the child bearers, the home makers, the moral light of the universe as they meet the purpose of God and Nature and seek not to thwart it by unsexing themselves in order that they may keep step with man in ways of self-indulgent dalliance.²

The climax of the author's argument against suffrage for women in which he expresses his reaction to the marches on Albany, New York, and Washington, D. C., suggests in its tone the remantic, chivalrous attitude toward womanhood that prevailed, in legend at least, in the Old South.

Often I have felt like swearing 'You idiots!' and then like crying 'Poor dears!' But I have kept on with them, and had I been in Albany or Washington I would have caught Rosalie Jones in my arms, and before she

1. Ibid., p. 103.

2. Ibid., p. 196.

could say 'Jack Robinson' have exclaimed:
 'You ridiculous child, go and get a bath
 and put on some pretty clothes and come
 and join us at dinner in the State Banquet
 Hall, duly made and provided for you and
 the rest of you delightful sillies.' ¹

Of all the episodes which suggest some inadequacy in Watterson's comprehension of the society of his own era, none so forcefully provokes the reader as the author's account of his intimacy with Jay Gould and the profits which he made from the relationship. The ambiguity arises from what is left unsaid rather than from what is said. Yet, in the light of Henry Adams' shrewd and damning analysis of the financier in his Chapters of Erie, it will be seen that the following passage leaves Watterson in a clearcut dilemma of which the terms are ethical impropriety or naivete.

... his [Dr. Norvin Green] office in the Western Union Building became my downtown headquarters.

There I met Jay Gould familiarly; ... and occasionally other of the Wall Street leaders. In a small way -- though not for long -- I caught the stock-gambling fever. But I was on the 'inside,' and it was a cold day when I did not 'clean up' a goodly amount to waste uptown in the evening. I may say that I gave this over through sheer disgust of acquiring so much and such easy and useless money, ... Money is purely relative. The root of all evil, too. Too much of it may bring ills as great as not enough.

At the outset of my stock-gambling experience I was one day in the office of President Edward H. Green, of the Louisville and Nashville Railway ... He

1. Ibid., p. 199.

said to me, 'How are you in stocks?'

'What do you mean?' said I.

'... I want to try your luck.

Look over this stock list and pick a stock. I will take a crack at it.

All I make we'll divide, and all we lose I'll pay.'

'Will you leave this open for an hour or two?'

'What is the matter with it -- is it not liberal enough?'

'The matter is that I am going over to the Western Union to lunch. The Gould party is to sit with the Orton-Green party for the first time after their fight, and I am asked especially to be there. I may pick up something.'

Big Green, as he was called, paused a moment reflectively. 'I don't want any tip -- especially from that bunch,' said he. '... But, go ahead, and let me know this afternoon.'

At luncheon I sat at Doctor Green's right, Jay Gould at his left. ... When The rest had departed, leaving Doctor Green, Mr. Gould and myself at table, mindful of what I had come for, in a bantering way I said to Doctor Green: 'Now that I am a Wall Street ingenu, why don't you tell me something?'

Gould leaned across the table and said in his velvet voice: 'Buy Texas Pacific.'

... Five or six months later I received from him [Edward H. Green] a statement of account ... with a check for some thousands of dollars, my one-half profit¹

Henry Watterson, to summarize the several facets of his thinking presented in these quotations, was seemingly the intellectual heir of a basically simple and emotional world view rooted in the pre-Civil War culture of the South. He appears to have measured his world with a mind calibrated in terms of an emotional religious faith, a chivalrous and even sentimental conception of women, and a purely personal relationship

1. Ibid., pp. 203 ff.

among men.

A somewhat later and considerably less important figure than Henry Watterson was the nineteenth and early twentieth century novelist, Annie Fellows Johnston. Mrs. Johnston, as she is revealed in the pages of her autobiography, The Land of the Little Colonel, seems to have approximated in real life Henry Watterson's conception of woman-kind. Mrs. Johnston's autobiography is the record of a person whose life was spent in the simple environment described in the earlier part of this thesis but with the elements of business and violence deleted, leaving only the romantically tending influence of an agrarian life dominated by religion. It was of this life, Mrs. Johnston tells us, that she wrote in her novels -- novels of which Cale Young Rice writes: "Today, I am told, some public libraries of the country taboo her [Mrs. Johnston's] books as being too sentimental." ¹

Mrs. Johnston begins her autobiography with a vivid description of the sleepy little town of Pewee Valley, Kentucky, in which she spent her childhood. She portrays somewhat romantically a regular morning scene at the post-office when persons who were seemingly small land owners gathered leisurely and even ceremoniously to receive their mail. There is a nostalgia in the passage for the pastoral calm of life in this secluded little village particularly in the sharp contrast which it makes with the urgent social and economic developments engulfing the outside world.

The smart equipages of summer residents were drawn up in front of it [the post-office]. Old family carryalls loaded with children in care of their black mammies joined the procession, and pretty girls and their escorts on horseback drew rein in the shade of the locusts arching the road.

1. Rice, Cale Young, Bridging the Years, New York., D. Appleton-Century Co., 1939.

... the families represented here were sprung from the old Virginia stock and showed their birth and breeding both in feature and charm of manner.

There was much visiting back and forth among the carriages while they waited. ...

A stranger seeing the gay assemblage for the first time would conclude that all the world was on a holiday. ... ¹

Mrs. Johnston's early religious life was essentially like that which has become familiar in this study. Her father was a minister and maintained a library of theological works from which the writer drew most of her early reading. A great part of her life was centered about the church -- as a girl she frequently played in the parish house and adjoining cemetery. Furthermore, Mrs. Johnston developed a highly emotional patriotism:

Those of you who have read 'Mary Ware in Texas' will recall how thrilled she was when she went to Fort Sam Houston. 'As she saw for the first time these men who stood as the guardians of "Old Glory," everything she had ever read of heroism and blood-stained battle fields and glorious dying came back to her in a flood of enthusiasm which nearly lifted her to her feet. When at last the band struck into "The Star-spangled Banner" and the guns fired the signal which heralded the lowering of the colors, her plain little face was almost transfigured with the exalted emotions of the moment.'

I knew just how she felt. ²

A significant experience recorded in Mrs. Johnston's autobiography is her account of a visit to the Chicago slums at the end of the nineteenth century. It was not simply a coincidence that Mrs. Johnston should have

1. Johnston, Annie Fellows, Op. cit., p. 4.

2. Ibid., p. 45.

been confronted with one of the ugly realities of an urbanized, industrialized civilization. In a social sense her experience typifies the collision of the old agrarian life pattern still surviving in parts of Kentucky with the ever expanding industrial civilization which is replacing it. Every autobiographer discussed in this chapter on the Kentucky intellectual, and notably Jesse Stuart, whose work will be analyzed in Chapter Six, underwent a similar experience. Mrs. Johnston describes the occurrence and her response.

While there [Chicago], it was suggested that I write a story of the Deaconess movement. It was much like Jane Addams' work at the Hull House.

... each day a different deaconess took me out with her on her rounds, thus giving me the opportunity of seeing the slums of a great city from many angles, and furnishing me with the material I desired.

It was a group of earnest, consecrated women, leading lives of the greatest self-sacrifice -- of such stuff as the saints are made. ...

The first night, when I went down to the dining-room, I expected to meet a row of meek-faced black-clad women, but to my surprise it was as jolly as a boarding-school; and as I looked around on the bright faces and listened to the laughing conversation which enlivened the meal, I wondered how they could be so gay when they had been all day in such places as had been described to me.

I found my answer when we went into the large double parlors a little later. It was a cheerful place made homelike by many books and softly shaded lamps One of the deaconesses sat at a piano slowly striking chords, as she waited for the different groups to settle into silence. Presently the notes of 'Abide With Me' went stealing through the room and everyone took up the prayerful words.

At the conclusion Miss A., who sat in an armchair in the chimney-corner with the firelight shining on her gray hair and placid face, closed her book and looked around the circle. Mother A. they called her sometimes...

'What shall we ask for tonight girls?' she asked. 'What are our especial needs? You may begin, Emily.'

'I want help for a poor family of Swedes I found today. The father has been out of work for three months and is nearly frantic, for he has used his last penny and several of the children are sick. I made inquiries and found he is a first-class machinist. I promised to find him a position, so please ask that I may be guided to the right place tomorrow.' ...

Miss A.'s question passed around the room and each one had some story to tell of especial need or suffering that had appealed to her during the day. For a little space there was a silence in which only the crackling of the fire was audible. Then Miss A. repeated softly as she knelt to pray, 'Cast thy burden on the Lord and he will sustain thee.'

This prayer called people by their names. It asked for work for Jan Ericson and a home for the two orphaned sisters; peace for a penitent girl in the jail and hope for a grief-stricken woman whose baby had died by the hand of a drunken father. One by one she mentioned their names, and gave them into the keeping of the All-merciful Father. One was thrilled by the confident trust of her asking.¹

In so far as the autobiography tells, Mrs. Johnston made no use of her observations of the slums in composing her later novels. From whatever motives this omission arose, it forms a significant contrast to that strong literary current, then in the making, which was to produce novels of social protest, often in a bitterly naturalistic vein, that took as their themes such social and economic evils as Miss Johnston witnessed. After her Chicago experience the author returned to Louisville

1. Ibid., pp. 99-102.

where, except for intermittent traveling, she lived and continued writing in her old style for another thirty years.

One of the most voluminous but, for the purposes of this thesis, least productive works in the literature of Kentucky autobiography is Irvin S. Cobb's Exit Laughing.¹ This is not to say that Mr. Cobb's book is not interesting and entertaining reading, which certainly it is. However, the book is composed in an extravagant journalistic prose style which considerably inflates the few simple meanings to which the book is reduced upon analysis. The writer and his autobiography have a warmth and gusto which arouse the reader's sympathy more than does the austere autobiography produced by Cale Young Rice, but this mild geniality loses some of its effectiveness when one begins to realize that Mr. Cobb is mining the last remains of an American literary style which yielded its greatest riches in Mark Twain. Essentially, Irvin S. Cobb endeavors to carry on the tradition of the amiable, homely Southerner who views the world with kindly philosophical humor; but the effort to transplant the genre into the new mass media of New York journalism and the Hollywood movie distorted and corrupted it. Because this traditional frontier humor embodies an essentially romantic point of view, Mr. Cobb had the further disadvantage of having to romanticize a lot of the shoddy reality of his twentieth world, an obligation which further weakens the autobiography. Much of the intended humor is only grotesque while the keen social insights so frequently and honestly presented in the old Mark Twain humor are now, in Mr. Cobb's work, compromised by a journalistic superficiality.

1. Cobb, Irvin S., Exit Laughing, New York, The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1941.

Irvin S. Cobb was born and raised in Paducah, Kentucky, in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The simple social pattern which has become familiar in this discussion nurtured his early development also. In the first chapters of the book the author describes a series of events which one already expects, stories of violence, emotional religious experience and small scale commercial enterprise.

These Paducahans took their politics very seriously and their not infrequent homicidal outbreaks almost casually. A pistol affray was a 'shooting scrape' and a killing (among the better families) a 'regrettable occurrence.' ¹

Mr. Cobb gives further evidence to support a minor theme which has appeared in this discussion; that is, the custom among some Southerners of reading nineteenth century romantic fiction and incorporating the mores described therein in their own behavior.

Except in the very rudest groups- and sometimes even there- behavior was exact and punctilious. You see the average man went armed, and a suspected weapon on the other fellow's flank was mighty conducive to politeness. You might have called it laziness, but these folk took the time to be courteous and accomodating to the stranger, took time for indulging in small grace notes and complimentary fluting amongst themselves. They read Sir Walter Scott and Lord Chesterfield's Letters. They did at our house. ²

Mr. Cobb lived to see Paducah, which in his childhood, in the 1880's, still preserved some of the flavor of a river town of the pre-Civil War era, revolutionized completely by the growth of industrialism. The author expresses a dislike of the change- he devotes several pages to a descrip-

1. Ibid., p. 73.

2. Ibid., p. 74.

tion of how the old romantic individualism of the city was destroyed by the regimenting effects of large scale commercial enterprises. Yet he urges himself and his readers to believe that these social and economic changes have not modified the spiritual or human characteristics of the town. In this awkward reconciliation is epitomized the intellectual paradox into which Mr. Cobb's declarations, many of them on major problems, frequently lead. His prologue helps the reader in an interpretation of the argument which follows:

I reckon its easy to dream and be a sentimentalist if you have a dependable liver and mine has never given serious cause for complaint. ¹

Nowadays, through the regimenting uniformity of chain stores and service stations and mail-order agencies and modernistic store fronts, this looks like almost any interior smallish city you'd a mind to think of. And what with soft-coal smoke and monoxide gas and spilt gasoline on greasy concrete, it smells like any man's town. But I love to think and I think I'm right that my town has kept some of its understanding elements of the former days: the saving grace of tolerance, the joke-loving, yarn-spinning tendencies, the instinctive hospitality, the noble and commendable vanity of its self-satisfaction; the abiding courage under adversity or disaster. ²

Mr. Cobb evinced a conception of his work as a journalist and author which suggests much the same commercial attitude he had observed as a boy in the horse traders and tobacco appraisers in Paducah. In the following passage dedicated to George Horace Lorimer, who was editor of The Saturday Evening Post, Irvin Cobb illustrates how the three separate

1. Ibid., p. 74.

2. Ibid., p. 75.

ideas of romanticism, art, and commerce intermingled in his thinking.

Lorimer was the one who first realized that in a country dedicated to business, fiction with a business background- in other words the romance of business- would make popular reading and capitalized that invention to the agreeable tune of millions in circulation.¹

Mr. Cobb supplements this declaration with an aesthetic critique setting forth his view of literature as a creative function.

Now if you are saying that writing is the most laborious and wearing of the so-called (and mis-called) creative arts, there I'll agree with you and, what's more, I'll prove it: When not giving concerts, a musician finds joy in playing for his own delectation. An actor not professionally engaged delights to take part in benefits. In his off hours a portrait painter does water-color sketches, largely to amuse himself. And I assume that an architect on vacation enjoys making drawings to show how he could have improved on the design for the Taj Mahal. But show me a writer who, when not writing for pay, deliberately writes for fun or for self-expression, and I'll show you one of the rarest cases of freakish misapplication in the entire dime museum of the human race.²

Cale Young Rice, like Irvin Cobb, was also an author, but he was predominantly interested in poetry. Cale Rice was born and spent his early life in Dixon, Kentucky, an environment and era (1875) not much different from Irvin Cobb's.³ Mr. Rice's recollections of his childhood, recorded in the autobiography, Bridging the Years⁴ include many

1. Ibid., p. 115.

2. Ibid., p. 319.

3. For a sympathetic and thorough study of Mr. Rice's life, philosophy and works see: Bere, Jenny Rose, Cale Young Rice, a Study of His Life and Works, thesis (M.A.), University of Louisville, 1939. This thesis is, in many respects, more informative than Mr. Rice's autobiography.

4. Rice, Cale Young, Bridging the Years, New York, D. Appleton-Century Co. 1939.

details similar to Mr. Cobb's.

We were allowed much freedom but insistently subjected to one thing- the influence of Church and Bible. As the great poetry of the Old and New Testaments was practically the only poetry I was to know until I was almost grown, it must be given much credit for my literary destination: though when I first began to write my father once shyly told me, as if trying to explain my poetic obsession, that as a young man he used to recite Scott's poetry while following the plow.¹

In recalling his early life, the author acknowledges the cultural sterility of the environment, but urges the superiority of pastoral simplicity to the urban industrial civilization which is supplanting it- an admission of a reaction against the movement of modern civilization.

... I can ... say gratefully that ... life could hardly have had a healthier soil in which to grow than that of Dixon, Kentucky, the town of my birth. For though my beginnings there, in 1872, were far from the great centers of opportunity and culture, they were deeply simple and close to the earth. The land I walked was green under foot, not dark with the grime of industrial dominance which had perturbed the agricultural South and helped bring on the Civil War.²

In this section on Kentucky intellectuals especial emphasis has been given to recollections of childhood environment and experiences which the authors record. Furthermore, it has been suggested that in important respects these environments show a similarity to the primitive conditions of life described by other Kentuckians whose autobi-

1. Ibid., p. 17.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

ographies were described earlier in this thesis. Then it has been shown that, in later life, when these persons were confronted with intellectual problems which were distinctly new, they at times took an ambiguous position, and moreover, frequently aligned themselves with traditional intellectual movements or points of view which were becoming obsolete. An example of this latter kind, already noted, was the humorist, Irvin Cobb, who in the twentieth century was reminiscent of Mark Twain. The conclusion suggested by these two factors of similar childhood environments and similar adult intellectual experience is that the effort to reconcile the individualistic and even romantic view of life gained in a simple and traditional agrarian environment with the complex social problems arising from distinctly new and unfamiliar conditions reacted in these several individuals to produce intellectual conservatism.

A valuable corroboration of this suggestion applying to Cale Young Rice, whose description of his own childhood has just been quoted, is found in Miss Bere's thesis.

In spite of his reputation as a cosmopolitan, Mr. Rice shows a preference for his own native soil
He prefers to be known as a Southern poet rather than a metropolitan one, and enjoys New York only as a visitor. His preference for the more conservative south is in keeping with his preference for a conservative type of poetry. An examination of the works of Mr. Rice shows his fundamental preoccupation with the Romantic tradition. Although he shows the influence of realism he is never extreme and never loses entirely his character as a romanticist.¹

1. Bere, Jenny Rose, Op. cit., p. 11.

While Mr. Rice was still a boy, his family moved to Evansville, Indiana. Among his recollections of that community is one of the intensity of its interest in business matters.

In school or out, Evansville had then little culture to offer, but like most American cities was bent on capturing the eagle on the American dollar.¹

Mr. Rice grew to young manhood in Evansville and then went to Cumberland College, an institution sponsored by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. A short time after his graduation from Cumberland, the poet went to Harvard University where for a period of two years he studied philosophy under William James and George Santayana. Mr. Rice attributed great importance to his Harvard studies in his later intellectual development. He writes:

The scholastic years that followed were of great consequence to my whole future- literary and intellectual. During them I was brought into contact for the first time with men of high ambition or genius, so was enabled to estimate my own abilities.²

Just how much confidence his study of philosophy for two years at Harvard gave Mr. Rice and how high an evaluation of his own abilities he set is implied in the following judgement which the poet made of Mark Twain, one of the greatest novelists America has produced.

Mark was too lonely to bear his grief away from his friends, so each day we saw much of him... 'God,' he would exclaim

1. Rice, Cale Young, Op. cit., p. 18.

2. Ibid., p. 38.

then, 'is a mere jester who pulls our heart-strings to see us squirm.' ... The plight of his mind, which lacked the philosophical education and poise to orient itself in a bewildering world, was lamentable.¹

Despite frequent references, such as the last one, to philosophical ideas, Mr. Rice seldom explicitly states in the autobiography what his ideas are, an omission which is tantalizing to the reader. For this reason Bridging the Years may be likened to Henry Watterson's autobiography in that it approaches the style of intellectual autobiography but generally subordinates ideas to a recital of events - events which are either unexplained or uninterpreted. The following passage is a good example of such an occurrence:

Like her great brother, Corinne Roosevelt Robinson had to a rare degree the gift of enthusiasm, and of communicating it to her friends and guests. Her connections were not only poetical but with the larger world of affairs. Gathered about her table, where the food was always of the best, were many brilliant groups who discussed with a light yet serious touch the affairs of the day.²

An informative and unusual aspect of Mr. Rice's autobiography and one which, in the thoroughness and intimacy of its detail, may be thought of as compensating for the incomplete discussion of the poet's philosophy is the careful record which the author includes of the popular reception of his works and his own criticism of his critics. In these passages the reader is permitted, by virtue of Mr. Rice's frankness, to observe that

1. Ibid., p. 95.

2. Ibid., p. 184.

part of a creative artist's experience which he is frequently unwilling to share; that is, his opinion of himself and his reaction to the critical opinion of others. Thus, Mr. Rice candidly explains in the following passage that an artist may be penalized for excellence as well as for the reverse:

It seemed for a while that Porzia would find a producer and reach the stage; then the quest became hopeless. There was manifestly less room for poetic drama on Broadway than ever before. Perhaps also antagonism to the praise my work had received was beginning to be felt, resentment against the frequently made assertion that I was 'America's foremost poet.' ¹

In the autobiography the author replies directly to unfavorable reviewers, attributing their criticisms to malevolence rather than to an unbiased appraisal of his creations as works of art. In his rebuttal the poet includes examples of the praise of his admirers; but since these latter are recorded without comment, it is difficult to determine whether they are entered simply to balance the expressions of his detractors or, rather, to represent Mr. Rice's impression of what constitutes a fair appraisal of his work which, for reasons of delicacy, he hesitated to express in his own words.

... Selected Plays and Poems ... published in 1936 ... climaxed my poetic endeavors and drew from many reviewers a reassertion of their opinion that such a body of work put me 'securely among the ranking poets of the day.' I did not, however, escape further malicious and even libelous detraction at this time. ²

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1. Ibid., p. 114.
 2. Ibid., p. 169.

A passage indirectly confirming the speculation that Mr. Rice's evaluation of his own merit tended to coincide with that of his admirers is the following. The selection suggests a tribute to the man rather than to his work. Of special interest, however, is the forthright manner in which the subject is handled, forming a contrast to the deprecatory way in which autobiographers sometimes treat references to themselves.

The last time I saw Mrs. Austin she was writing her book on genius and its inspirations, and asked if I would not, when I got home, sit down and write her an analysis of my own creative processes. I promised [I would] ... ¹

Mr. Rice mentions the literary work of his wife, Alice Hegan Rice, with praise and recalls the commercial success of her writing.

As I have said, A- [the author's symbol for Mrs. Rice] had followed the continuing success of Mrs. Wiggs and its sequel Lovey Mary with Mr. Opp, one of her most delightful creations, then with other volumes, all of which sold well. ... the humor, pathos and optimism of these books appealed to a wide range of tastes ²

Alice Hegan Rice's autobiography The Inky Way, already referred to in this discussion, is an interesting piece of supplementary reading when taken with her husband's autobiography; however, as Mrs. Rice herself tells us, the work adds little of importance to Mr. Rice's story for the evident reason that their lives were much the same. Such differences as do exist, the authoress insists, are of a kind making her own autobiography the less significant of the two.

1. Ibid., p. 181.

2. Ibid., p. 120.

Discussing the creation of the two works Mrs. Rice writes:

First C.Y.R. conceived and wrote Bridging the Years, which is not only a rare autobiography but an illuminating account of the development of twentieth-century poetry

No sooner had he finished this book of reminiscences than he inoculated me with the desire to write one of my own. It was a novel idea for two persons who for forty years had never been separated for more than ten days at a time, who had shared many of the same experiences, read many of the same books, and enjoyed the same friends, to attempt to deal separately with practically the same material.

But our approaches to life were entirely different. He had set down the observations and critical appraisements of a serious thinker, while my sole purpose was to salvage from a heap of recollections such shining memories and multi-colored scraps as might be worth preserving.¹

The modesty of Mrs. Rice's appraisal of herself, suggested in the previous passage by the great importance she ascribes to her husband's work in comparison with her own, finds expression elsewhere in the book, a quality not only praiseworthy for its eminent good sense in view of its probably accuracy, but for the sympathy which such honest informality cannot help but excite in the reader.

What has been achieved by my pen may not warrant recording, but the story of how a modest talent opened a world of romance and adventure to an unknown young person makes a Cinderella tale that may prove amusing.²

1. Rice, Alice Hegan, Op. cit., p. 266.

2. Ibid., p. 1.

Throughout The Inky Way, Mrs. Rice reiterates the distinction which she felt existed between her work and her husband's:

Temperamentally we were very unlike. He was a serious thinker, with unlimited ambition, I a gay dilettante with no thought of hitching my wagon to a star, but content to set it going with the hope that somehow it might coast to success. But despite these differences, our tastes, ideals, and standards were similar.¹

For the last of these statements Mrs. Rice's autobiography furnishes ample evidence, so much, in fact, that there is room for supposing that the differences which she draws between her husband and herself were not so emphatic as she suggests. It is true that Mrs. Rice's childhood experiences were markedly different from those of the other writers considered so far in this chapter. As a girl she lived for a time in a sophisticated urban environment.

Owing to the fact that my father's business necessitated frequent trips abroad, my young mother and their two small children were parked for safety in the largest hotel in Louisville. Three years of my childhood were passed in the old Galt House, the very name of which will recall to the minds of many, palatial parlors, stately halls, imposing stairways, and 'the ambrosial entertainment' that bespoke the luxury and elegance of the old South.²

Along with the luxury and elegance, Mrs. Rice was exposed to other of the cultural forms of the old South. Discussing some of the old legends associated with the Galt House, she recalls:

1. Ibid., p. 58.

2. Ibid., p. 10.

There were grimmer tales of bloody pistol duels fought in the corridors; of a skeleton discovered in the basement; of a famous black-robed ghost who haunted the waking hours of one of the proprietors. ¹

Thus does the familiar concept of violence appear in Mrs. Rice's autobiography. However, in the matter of religion the record is different from that of the other autobiographers considered herein:

With church it was different. My mother took me to the so-called Campbellite church where I slept peaceably with my head in her lap through the entire service. This was a disastrous precedent to establish, for to this day the continuous sound of a human voice produces unavoidable drowsiness. ²

Despite these variations in the environmental pattern, Mrs. Rice was, nonetheless, like Irvin S. Cobb, like Cale Young Rice, and like Annie Fellows Johnston, basically a romantic.

Being of an imaginative and somewhat extravagant nature, I saw everything slightly out of focus. My chief asset was probably an exaggerated sensibility that made things appear to me a bit funnier or a bit more pathetic than to the average person. By following my instinct and telling an incident as it appeared to me, I could often sharpen a reader's perceptions. ³

The author attributes her romanticism to instinct, yet, turning again to her descriptions of her childhood, there is evidence that environmental factors influenced this romantic attitude.

The strongest literary influence in my early life came through a spinster

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1. Ibid., p. 11.
 2. Ibid., p. 21.
 3. Ibid., p. 54.

aunt, who came to live with us soon after we acquired a home of our own. She possessed one of the most acquisitive minds I have ever known, and almost as soon as I possessed ears, she began pouring into them a steady flow of information. Not only did she instruct me in the three R's, but she instilled into me her own personal enthusiasms. Something melted within me when she sang the name 'Adelaide,' a curious tightening of my throat came when she repeated,

'It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year,'

and romance stirred my soul when I gazed at the picture of one whom I believed was her secret lover, whose name sounded like 'Gertie.'¹

Influenced by an aunt who was in turn influenced by the German romantic poet, Goethe, and the American romantic, Edgar Allan Poe, Mrs. Rice grew up to become, as she herself tells us, a writer of romantic fiction; to marry a man who was a romantic poet; and to enter - and this is the point which is to be emphasized here - together with her husband, a conscious reaction against the literary style of realism, which had become dominant at the time the Rices were writing. In expressing herself against realism, Mrs. Rice begins by quoting a letter written to her by Theodore Roosevelt after he had read Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch:

I am old-fashioned or sentimental or something about books. Whenever I read one I want in the first place to enjoy myself, and in the next, to feel that I am a little better and not a little worse for having read it. ... I do not want people to shirk

1. Ibid., p. 20

facts, or write what is not so, and it is often necessary to dwell on painful things; but I feel that they should be dwelt upon in proper fashion and not for the sake of giving a kind of morbid pleasure. ¹

Immediately after this quotation Mrs. Rice enters the following comment of her own:

We wonder what Mr. Roosevelt would think of some of our realistic fiction of today. ²

Then, elaborating on the disapproval implied in the foregoing remark, the authoress expresses her distaste for realism by contrasting it with her own literary work. Notice in the following passage that Mrs. Rice's criticisms are leveled at the technique of the realistic writer, at the vocabulary and subject matter, but that no mention is made of the philosophy underlying realism or of the purposes of such literature, an omission which suggests that Mrs. Rice did not fully comprehend the significance of realism. Observe the use of the term, "gentle reader."

Like a small literary Daniel I had plunged blithely into the lions' den with no fear of the public or the critics. Fortunately it was in the days when the gentle reader, confronted with rotten and green fruit, preferred the latter. 'Wholesome' and 'whimsical' and 'pure' were not then terms of opprobrium.

Those of us who learned to write when taste was a thing to be reckoned with are under a serious handicap today. We lack the necessary vocabulary to meet the demand of the hour. Some

1. Ibid., p. 69.

2. Ibid., p. 70.

benevolent lexicographer should compile a dictionary of obscenities and profanities and bring the old fogies up to date.

In a national book review a writer recently said: 'In these dangerous and neurotic days even humor is suspect and has to be done with an edge and a bite. We must be nasty about something or somebody, or what is man for?'

If one doesn't happen to feel nasty, what can one do about it? ¹

This analysis of Mrs. Rice's autobiography concludes Chapter Four. However, the theme of intellectual autobiography in Kentucky literature will be resumed in Chapter Six with a detailed study of Jesse Stuart's Beyond Dark Hills. Certain conclusions will be deferred until that point.

From the material collected in this chapter, some generalizations may be made. All of the writers, excepting Mrs. Rice, were subjected in their youth to roughly similar environmental influences - influences which were pretty much continuous with those of the historical past revealed in the earlier autobiographies. The several writers shared a community of attitudes in tending to cling to the cultural ideals they had learned in childhood; in maintaining an intellectually conservative attitude toward ideological innovations deriving from critical changes in American culture; and, in the case of the authors, in aligning themselves with literary movements which were generally abandoned in their own time. Finally, although all of these works approach being that kind of personal history called intellectual autobiography; and although, by reason of the occupations of the people who wrote them

1. Ibid., p. 72.

and the subject matter which the works contain, these autobiographies fit more nearly into that category than any other, yet none of them is a pure example of intellectual autobiography in the sense in which The Education of Henry Adams or even, as will be shown, Jesse Stuart's Beyond Dark Hills is, a defection arising from the authors' practice of sacrificing a discussion of ideas to a description of events.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ENTREPRENEUR IN KENTUCKY AUTOBIOGRAPHY

In this chapter still a further category of autobiography is introduced. The effect of this addition is to widen rather than to deepen the canvas of this study. However, some depth or re-enforcement is gained. Colonel Winn's Down the Stretch¹ repeats many characteristics of Kentucky autobiography already discussed herein; Abraham Flexner's I Remember² could have been included in the discussion of intellectual autobiography.

The two works brought together in this chapter may seem awkwardly juxtaposed. Colonel Winn was a sportsman who enjoyed enormous success as a speculator and as a promoter of commercialized horse racing in which latter activity he has become one of the most renowned figures in America. Abraham Flexner was an educator who assisted in the development of numerous American educational projects including the reorganization of medical education and the establishment of the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. Thus the seemingly divergent pursuits of these two men and particularly the widely differing cultural values which their activities have contributed to society suggest that their autobiographies could have little in common. To show that the reverse is true is the problem of this chapter. Before the similarity between these works will become convincingly clear, of course, considerable documentation and analysis must be presented. It is possible, however,

1. Menke, F.G., and Winn, M.J., Down the Stretch, Smith and Durrell, New York, 1945.

2. Flexner, Abraham, I Remember, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1940.

to describe immediately and briefly in what respects these authors are alike. Such a description, by making clear in a general way the direction of the following discussion, will make the discussion more understandable.

It is Abraham Flexner who must be understood if one is to perceive the likeness between him and Colonel Winn. Flexner did not think of himself as an intellectual. In one place in the autobiography he calls himself a layman, in another, a salesman. He states specifically that he did not feel himself suited to become a college professor. These several declarations square with the personality revealed in the autobiography, for although Flexner was associated with education all of his life, it is important to recognize that except for a few years when he was a young man, he was not a teacher but was an administrator and organizer. His contacts were not primarily with students or even teachers but with the administrators of educational institutions and wealthy business men between which two latter groups he acted as a liason. Although his functions in this capacity were numerous being those of an observer, critic, and innovator, his most important role and the one which supplies the most dramatic passages in the autobiography was as a solicitor and manipulator of enormous sums of money with which to revise or create educational facilities. Flexner relates how a well-pointed joke which he told to J. P. Morgan caused the latter to donate two million dollars to an endowment fund; how a carefully worded, four page memorandum to John D. Rockefeller induced the financier to contribute more than twenty million dollars to medical education;

how a shrewdly planned interview with George Eastman brought a five million dollar donation to establish the University of Rochester School of Medicine.

It is in this last described talent, in this rare genius for manipulating men and wealth, that the basic likeness between Winn and Flexner emerges. Each of these men was endowed with that uncanny shrewdness, seemingly intuitive rather than rational and, hence, beyond analysis or formulation, that turns every occasion to opportunity and that with a Midas touch creates values where seemingly none before existed. This is not a cursory parallel; the possession of this skill was for both Winn and Flexner the indispensable precondition to all their vast works. However different the superstructure of their respective achievements, at the root of each was the unique wisdom of the entrepreneur.

An interesting detail may be noted in passing. The lives of Winn and Flexner represent an appearance in Kentucky experience of a kind of human activity which is traditionally, although perhaps inaccurately, regarded as uniquely American. That is the clever yankee opportunism of which the implausible P. T. Barnum is the archetype.

In addition to the important similarity already noted, numerous other vital parallels occur in these works. For men with such ambition as Winn and Flexner had, for designs of such great magnitude as those they planned, the resources bounded by Kentucky no longer sufficed. Each man became a world traveler, Flexner visiting England and the continent to survey educational practices there, Winn traveling to England and France to observe race track operation and management. Both became

executives in administrative systems whose interests, far from being confined to Kentucky, extended over the United States and even foreign countries. Both men lived for long intervals outside Kentucky principally in New York and Chicago.

Most interesting of all, however, is the way in which the lives and interests of both Winn and Flexner were mutually embraced by the influence of certain men whose wealth and prestige in America were pre-eminent. Colonel Winn and Abraham Flexner reached a coterminous position with respect to these financiers probably without ever becoming aware of each other's presence. Thus it is that the reader encounters the names of John D. Rockefeller and Payne Whitney in both autobiographies. To Abraham Flexner, John D. Rockefeller was the man who responded to a four page memorandum with a gift of twenty million dollars. To Matt Winn, John D. Rockefeller was the man who agreed to give his support, if it were needed, to Jim Butler when the latter and Colonel Winn began their fight to open the Empire City Race Track against the powerful opposition of the New York Jockey Club.

Colonel Winn speaks respectfully of Payne Whitney as one of the outstanding figures in American racing. Abraham Flexner describes Payne Whitney as the man who gave eight million dollars to the Cornell Medical School as a result of a conversation which took place in Mr. Whitney's automobile one afternoon in New York City while Mr. Whitney was driving Mr. Flexner home.

Because of the several conditions explained in the latter part of this analysis, that is because these men traveled widely and lived out-

side of Kentucky much of the time, because they engaged in enterprises which were national and even international in extent, and because they tended to gravitate toward a select and enormously influential class whose interests were cosmopolitan, there occurs in the autobiography of this chapter more than in any other, a diminution of characteristics which could be labeled Kentuckian or which could be pointed to as suggesting some definition peculiar to this state. Conversely, there appears here a fusion of Kentucky experience, a junction as it were, which suggests, at least, a leveling off, a homogenizing of the regional in American life with the national. The foregoing is mentioned only as a tendency; in Colonel Winn, of course, because of his interest in a sport which is traditionally associated with Kentucky, some will find grounds for urging that his autobiography, more than any other, is representative of that which is uniquely Kentuckian. Some consideration should be given to this argument; nevertheless, as the discussion turns now to a specific consideration of Colonel Winn's Down the Stretch and then Abraham Flexner's I Remember, it should become apparent in the case of the former that the decisive quality in Winn's career was not his interest in horses- it might as well have been wholesale groceries; his methodology as a promoter accounts for the magnitude of his achievements.

Colonel Winn begins by explaining why he wrote his autobiography. He enjoyed a sense of accomplishment in looking back upon the era through which he had lived and felt his memories deserved to be written down. The writer recalls that when Frank G. Menke, co-author of the autobiography, first mentioned the idea to him, Colonel Winn mistook the suggestion for a publicity stunt.

Something more than a year ago, Frank sought me out-and he had more questions.

'Oh, no you don't,' I said, when he told me he wanted some new information. 'It's out of season for Derby publicity stories, and you've written your book. No, sir, no questions now.'

'But,' he protested, 'this is for something different. This is for another book. We are writing another book.'

'Are we?' I asked. 'And why?'

'Because,' he answered, 'you have lived through four generations of miraculous achievements.'

And so I have. ¹

To illustrate what he regards as the significant achievements of his era, Colonel Winn begins by describing the conditions of life which prevailed in his boyhood. Among the details which he mentions is the method which was used for obtaining a domestic water supply. This passage is of particular interest because by coincidence, Flexner, who is contemporary with Winn, also chose to describe this aspect of life in Louisville in the latter part of the nineteenth century. His description will be introduced later for comparative purposes. Colonel Winn writes:

There was no civic water supply in my boyhood. At various street corners were water wells. People would go there with buckets, fill them with water, and haul them home. As a boy, that was one of my principal chores, and Saturday was a day I never looked forward to with any real enjoyment.

Saturday was bath day.

Almost every family in our neighborhood had a cistern, which caught rain water, but there usually never was more of that than was necessary for dish washing. So the bath water had to be hauled from the corner pump, two pailsful at a time, four pails for each bath, and, if the family was large that meant a lot of water. Additionally,

1. Winn, M. J., Op. cit., p. xi.

on Saturdays, water had to be hauled for Saturday and Sunday drinking, cooking and so on, and usually the orders were to have enough for wash day on Monday too.

In my time, I carried enough water to launch a few plane carriers.¹

Colonel Winn mentions his early education and his religious background. The latter, as will be seen, was to assist him well in a severe crisis of his later life.

My parents were parishioners at Saint Patrick's Church in Louisville, and my earliest teaching was in the parochial school presided over by the Xavier brothers. ...

The Cathedral of the Assumption is the place where my father and mother married; where I was christened, but I made my first communion at St. Patrick's Church.²

The author discusses his philosophy, the manner in which he acquired it, and its usefulness to him in his later life.

I was on the road for better than 10 years, and it was in those Kentucky hills, among the illiterate, that I built my body into ruggedness, and acquired, from those people, a philosophy, and a tolerance which helped me immeasurably in the later years when I was meeting the blue bloods of American aristocracy, and the mental giants in the financial and industrial life of the United States.³

Colonel Winn was not satisfied with the wisdom he thus acquired but sought often in later life to adjust his philosophy to the increasingly complex demands which his successful career imposed upon

1. Ibid., p. xiii.

2. Ibid., p. 43.

3. Ibid., p. 46.

him. He mentions in the autobiography how he sought the advice of those whom he respected.

Our landlord was a man named McKnight. He operated a store in the same building, and sold rugs, carpets and similar household equipment. He had a splendid reputation, was very popular, and also prosperous. I went to him and said: 'Mr. McKnight, I'd like to ask a favor.' 'Go right ahead,' he urged. 'Up to now, I've been in the grocery business,' I explained. 'Most of my contacts were with small storekeepers. I will come into contact now with different people. I will, perhaps, come to meet the kind of people you meet and deal with. You have been a great success in your business. Will you please tell me how I can become successful in mine?' McKnight smiled, tapped me on the shoulder and said: 'I can give you the answer in just three words—always be polite.' I was only 26 then, but his words are still etched in my mind. ¹

Of particular interest in the autobiography of Colonel Winn, of course, is the manner in which he became associated with the Kentucky Derby. The author describes this part of his life fully and with a touch of drama. It is a story compounded of sentiment and business acumen.

LATE IN THE AUTUMN OF 1902, CHARLIE PRICE, FORMER NEWSpaper editor, and the Secretary at the Churchill Downs race track, dropped into my office, sat down, and, without preliminary, bluntly asked me to buy the Churchill Downs property.

'Why should I do that?' I encountered [sic] 'Because,' replied Price, 'if you don't buy it, the track will have to close and there won't be any more Kentucky Derbies.' I was dumfounded. ...

1. Ibid., p. 48.

The prospect of the ending of the Derby appalled me. I had seen every running since the first in 1875. Derby Day always had been the great festival day in Louisville; the one we all looked forward to as reunion time with old friends; the day of feasting and high jinks, and plenty of comradeship, all of it climaxed by the race itself.

'What's the answer?' requested Price, breaking in upon my memories.

'I'm a merchant tailor-and a horse player,' I told him. 'That satisfies me. Find another customer.'

'I can't,' said Price. ...

'Are these cold facts, Charlie?'

'The absolute truth,' he answered.

'This is a rash and reckless thing you are asking me to do,' I told him. 'I'd say "No" and make it stick for a thousand years if it involved anything but the Derby. But they mustn't stop running that race. Let me think this over for a few days, then drop around to see me.' ¹

Thus was the author thrust in a situation of conflict which poised his business judgement against his affections. He describes his deliberations.

I took my time-plenty of it, but I knew very well what the decision would be. What other decision could there be when I thought of Churchill Downs in the afternoons of gentle springtime, in the golden haze of autumn; Churchill Downs of fragrant memories, where, all through the years, friends had gathered to tell their stories and have their laughs; to dine and to wine, to play the horses of their choice, and winner or loser, wend their separate ways, only to be back the next day to live again in the exciting, thrill-packed crucible that is a race track? ²

Colonel Winn and a group of his friends formed a partnership which bought Churchill Downs and with it a substantial business and financial

1. Ibid., p. 1.

2. Ibid., p. 2.

problem. Every previous management group, including the one which sold out to Colonel Winn and his partners, had been so unsuccessful in the operation of Churchill Downs that it had been forced to dispose of the track to avert bankruptcy. This record of failure heightens the impressiveness of Winn's success. The author declares, in italics, that in every year since 1902, when he assumed control of Churchill Downs, the track has operated at a profit. This achievement was not brought about easily; yet there is nothing to suggest that the numerous difficulties which he faced displeased the author. His lively account of the aggressive and even hostile commercial maneuvers needed to promote the new venture reflect the attitude of the professional man toward the problems of his practice.

ONE OF MY FIRST ACTS AS GENERAL MANAGER
OF CHURCHILL Downs in 1904 precipitated
a turf war in the South and Middle West
that lasted for two bitter years. ¹

The author refers to the struggle which he organized and led to break the monopolistic control which the Western Turf Association exercised over its member tracks of which Churchill Downs was one. Colonel Winn, dissatisfied with the favoritism shown certain tracks in the conduct of the W. T. A.'s affairs, invited other track owners to join with him in the formation of a new group, the American Turf Association. The author was elected president of the new body and promptly began a campaign to seize control from the older association. In determining his strategy, Colonel Winn claims to have followed the precept of a great general.

Napoleon, of long ago, said that no

1. Ibid., p. 54.

battle can be won on defensive. Taking a leaf out of his book, I decided upon an aggressive offense, and deliberately waited until the W. T. A. had announced 1905 racing dates for the tracks which remained loyal to it. Then, in all the cities where we had a competing track, I named dates for our tracks identical with those of the W. T. A.

Some of the veteran track owners in our group were somewhat disturbed over what they at first called my recklessness. But they did not interfere with my program. ¹

Colonel Winn's judgement proved sound.

At the end of the second year, the W. T. A. had enough. They asked terms. We named them-they weren't harsh-because, after all, what we had been fighting for was merely a fairer apportionment of dates, and those we then had. The W. T. A. agreed to our demands, and the two year war was done. ²

It has been mentioned that both Abraham Flexner and Colonel Winn, as they began to achieve considerable success in their own careers, came into the spheres of influence of prominent, powerful Americans. Upon close examination the relationships thus established reveal an interesting complexity and even confusion. One finds, for example, in Down the Stretch an odd ambivalence of influences emanating from the vast interests of William Randolph Hearst which tended to drive the fortunes of Colonel Winn in two directions at once. In 1907 a reform movement began in the United States to abolish horse racing. By 1909 the abolitionists had succeeded in closing the race tracks in every state except Maryland, New York, and Kentucky. Moreover, according to the author, it appeared that tracks operating in the remaining

1. Ibid., p. 54.

2. Ibid., p. 55.

three states would be compelled to shut down because there was no longer any place to conduct winter race meetings. Colonel Winn explains that horse racing must be conducted on a year-round basis over a circuit of tracks in order to provide employment for racing personnel and incentive for owners and breeders. At this critical moment a group of three men approached the author with a proposal to evade the racing restrictions in the United States and provide a place for winter meets by opening a track in Mexico just across the border from Texas. The trio, who agreed to help finance the project, included a man named Jack Follansbee, who was manager of the Hearst mining properties in Mexico. The author describes the interview:

...while I was in New York, three gentlemen called on me. One was Price McKinney, my friend since El Paso days of a generation ago; another was Jack Follansbee, manager of the William Randolph Hearst mining properties, in Mexico. The third was a Mexican-Alberto Terrazas.

'We came in the hope of interesting you in a winter race track,' said McKinney.

'Where?' I asked.

'In Juarez, Mexico-just across the border from El Paso.'

They went into details. ...

'There aren't any anti-racing laws in Mexico,' said Follansbee. 'It gets cold sometimes during a Juarez winter, but, generally, the weather is good. We have rains, but horses can run on muddy tracks.'

I told the trio I would think it over.

'Of course,' volunteered McKinney, 'if you go ahead with this, we'll want to buy in with you. Count on us for as much as you may need.' ¹

1. Ibid., p. 79.

Winn and his companions decided to build the proposed track, which, incidentally, they operated until 1917. The decision proved a wise one for in 1910, the year following the interview quoted above, the crusade against horse racing in the United States was pursued with new vigor, led by the newspapers of William Randolph Hearst.

...the racing scene in the United States had grown more desolate.

The "reformers" had leveled their heaviest guns at the sport in New York State, with its five major tracks. The powerful Hearst papers had taken up the crusade in 1910, with the famous Arthur Brisbane writing lashing editorials, and with artists depicting the evils of race track operation.¹

Whether Colonel Winn ever recognized the irony in the conflicting fortunes thus inadvertently visited upon him by these diverse agents of the Hearst empire is not recorded.

Having thus solved on a business level the dilemma in which the conflict over racing had placed him, Colonel Winn found himself perplexed by the ethical implications of the controversy. In facing this aspect of the question, he felt his own resources inadequate and determined, therefore, to consult someone else. In a chapter entitled "No Trouble Getting to Heaven" the author tells of his consultation with a cardinal of the Catholic Church who relieved Winn of his misgivings.

The situation began to worry me; should I stay in racing or get out because, like all the other executives, I was automatically being painted with a stick of corruption?

1. Ibid., p. 105.

Failing to find my own answer, I decided to leave the decision to a prelate of the Roman Catholic Church--Cardinal Michael Logue, Primate of all Ireland, who was then on a visit to the United States and, like myself, and his large party of dignitaries, a guest of the Butlers [James Butler, owner of the Empire City race track in Yonkers, New York], at East View.

Cardinal Logue was a mite of a man--hardly an inch over five feet in height. He was undistinguished in appearance, but his mind was one of sheer brilliance, and, as a speaker, he was a spellbinder.

Cardinal Logue and I became good friends, and it was our custom to take walks together, soon after dawn of each day During one of the walks I said to Cardinal Logue:

'Your Eminence, a great problem confronts me. Would you mind if I explained it to you., so that you could understand my position and give me advice?'

'Tell me what troubles you, son,' invited the Cardinal.

'I was born in Kentucky,' I told him, 'where the heritage of each child is the love of a thoroughbred. I became interested in horses almost as soon as I could walk, and when the first opportunity came, I went to see the horses race against each other. As I grew older, and earned money, it seemed only the natural thing for me to back the horse of my choice with some of my earnings.'

'The great race in Kentucky is the Derby, run each spring. It isn't just a horse race in Kentucky, it's a day when Kentuckians get together for a reunion: a festival day, which means as much to many Kentuckians as St. Patrick's Day does to the Irish.' ¹

The interview continues at some length in the style suggested by the excerpt given above. The following passage resumes the discussion

1. Ibid., p. 106.

at the approach of its climax:

'Do you still bet on the horses?' asked Cardinal Logue.

'No,' I answered. 'I have not bet as much as a cigar on the outcome of a horse race anywhere since I became a race track executive. Nor will I ever make another wager while I am identified officially with racing for the reason that I feel that the patrons would think that a man in my position had an advantage in knowledge.'

'Your attitude has real merit,' said the Cardinal.

'The Hearst newspapers brand racing as something--well worse than unethical,' I told the Cardinal. 'If all they said was true, decent men would not be a part of it. But I have seen no basic wrong-doing in racing. I love horse racing as a sport; it is fascinating as a business. But I will get out of it tomorrow, and get into something else, if it is wrong.'

'You have so decided?' he asked.

'Yes,' I told him. 'That is my determination. ... I wish you to decide for me. Shall I get out because others say it is wrong--or shall I remain?'

Cardinal Logue slowed our walk, until we stood facing each other. Then he reached up, tapped me on a shoulder, looked squarely at me, and said:

'Son, if you don't do anything worse than bet on horses, or operate a race track where others bet on horses, you won't have any trouble getting to Heaven.'

My problem was forever solved. ¹

The several passages collected here are representative of the main currents of thought and behavior found in Colonel Winn's autobiography. In the conclusion of the foreword of this book one finds in the author's own words what is perhaps the most appropriate summary of this analysis of Down the Stretch that could be made. It is a statement in which is pretty well implicit the view of life expressed in

1. Ibid., pp. 107 ff.

this work.

Life has moved swiftly since the time of my birth in Louisville. Miracles have been wrought. ...

Moving pictures have come--and talking pictures. Astounding inventions have revolutionized chemistry and industry. Refrigerators are here--and dehydrators; electricity has been so harnessed as to revolutionize the habits of life itself.

All this within my 83 years.

Once a friend, commenting on what has happened since 1861, offered, in reflection, the question:

'And what were those thousands of millions of people doing who inhabited this earth up to 83 years ago?'

I didn't know but a good many of them, I told him, were having their fun just as they are today--playing the horses.

MATT J. WINN. ¹

In the introduction to this chapter the similarity between Abraham Flexner and Colonel Winn was emphasized. The parallel should not obscure important differences. I Remember is an autobiography written with greater subtlety and consciousness of self than Down the Stretch. The greater complexity of Flexner's work is immediately apparent. For example, when that author tells of his early educational influences, he not only interprets their significance but marshals them in an inclusive perspective explicitly estimating their effect on his life.

I was born in 1866, the sixth of nine children--seven boys and two girls. After the panic of 1873 our living conditions had to be materially altered, but, although the successive houses in which we lived became for many years smaller and smaller and our way of living simpler and simpler, there was nothing either in the atmosphere or the appearance of the home to suggest the poverty and hardship

1. Ibid., p. xviii.

in which we grew up. I am still at a loss to understand the courage and confidence with which my parents contemplated the future of their large family. I do not recall a single word of complaint. They did not bemoan their fate: never a word of bitterness or envy escaped either. ... What spiritual force sustained them? Religion? Perhaps--certainly to some extent it was a source of comfort. But at bottom they, like other pioneers, relied on themselves. ... Throughout this long and dreary period they instinctively dealt with their children in such a wise as to develop both initiative and intimacy. At an early age, for example, we began to be effected by the rationalistic spirit of the time. Our parents remained to the end of their lives pious Hebrews, attending the synagogue regularly and observing religious feasts. They saw us drift away into streams of thought and feeling that they did not understand. They interposed no resistance. For us Herbert Spencer and Huxley, then at the height of their fame and influence, replaced the Bible and the prayer book; never a word of remonstrance, inquiry, or expostulation escaped our parents. ¹

Earlier in this chapter a quotation was entered in which Colonel Winn described the civic water supply in Louisville in his boyhood. By coincidence Abraham Flexner discusses the same topic. In the comparison of these passages is afforded an unusually clear and succinct example of the differences between these writers. Flexner is not satisfied with the physical details but interprets the social and historical significance of the open water wells.

For a generation after our own youth there was no park system such as now exists. Hygiene was still unknown to our vocabulary. Infectious and contagious diseases were rampant and were accepted as matters of course. How could it be otherwise? We drank the chocolate-colored, unfiltered water of the Ohio

1. Flexner, Abraham, Op. cit., pp., 12 ff.

River or, worse still, the water from the pump at the street corner, polluted by open drainage which seeped through the loose stones. No family was without its case of typhoid. ... Measles, whooping cough, and diphtheria were common. Vaccination, though known, was not compulsory. I remember the yellow flags flying before houses where smallpox had broken out; at the sight of them we boys crossed the street. ¹

The author's life-long interest in, and esteem for, education is made understandable in the light of the importance he ascribed to it in influencing his own career.

THE DECISIVE moment of my life came in 1884 when, at the age of seventeen, I was sent by my oldest brother, Jacob, to the Johns Hopkins University. ²

Frequently Flexner, while dealing with one aspect of his career, will, with a single broad stroke, give a perspective throughout his entire life. Thus while describing his education at Johns Hopkins, he traces this influence across a sixty-year interval to the effect it had upon him when he set up the Institute for Advanced Study in the 1930's. The following passage, in addition to illustrating the assimilation of ideas mentioned above, gives an insight into Flexner's philosophy of education.

I think it is a modest claim to say that the founding of the Johns Hopkins University by President Gilman was the starting point of higher education, in the modern sense of the term, in the United States. But Gilman did more than prove that the country needed a university and that a university could be an institution of learning with a minimum of bricks and mortar.

1. Ibid., p. 23.

2. Ibid., p. 44.

He convinced the country of the importance of untrammelled research in every field of intellectual interest and activity. He exercised no pressure to produce and to print. He anticipated Ehrlich's motto: "Viel arbeiten, wenig publizieren," ⁴ though he realized the importance of scholarly and scientific journals and shortly proceeded to found and subsidize them. ¹

4. Work much; publish little. [Author's note].

It was Gilman's technique as an administrator that Flexner especially admired; continuing the discussion begun above, the author says:

In retrospect, President Gilman's wisdom and courage cannot be matched in the history of American education. Let us bear in mind that Baltimore was in the early seventies a provincial town in one of the border states. The country abounded in colleges, some of which called themselves universities, but none of which was a university in the proper sense of the term.

... Mr. Gilman set an example that few university executives have even yet imitated: he traveled through America and Western Europe in order to confer with outstanding scholars and scientists of the world before making an important appointment. Specialists in this or that branch may indeed possess the requisite skill and objectivity, but Gilman wished to make certain by going far from Baltimore in order not to be swayed by local or personal considerations. Having chosen his key men, he let them absolutely alone. Sixty years later, in creating the Institute for Advanced Study and in selecting its original staff, I adopted Gilman's procedure. ²

1. Ibid., p. 51.

2. Ibid., pp. 47 ff.

Thus far selections have been presented from I Remember with the intention of suggesting the main outlines of the author's experience. The discussion turns now to a matter which was treated at some length in the beginning of this chapter, that is, the basic similarity in philosophy or, less formally, attitude toward life, of Abraham Flexner and Colonel Winn. In the following passage, Flexner expresses lucidly and directly that which is only implicit in Colonel Winn's autobiography but which, could the latter have put it in words of such dignity, might be Winn's expression of his own outlook.

... I can, in retrospect, gauge the respective parts that accident and reflection have played in my life. It was accident that made a schoolteacher of me--the third, by the way, in the course of three generations. It was success in that career and my wife's foresight and courage that flung open the doors through which I have passed from that day to this. What part did reflection play? At any given moment, very little. I had, in modest measure, what Pasteur had called 'the prepared mind.' I had a wife who believed in my capacity more fully than I did myself. I was, despite outward reserve, venturesome to a degree that I recognized only after the event. I can realize now that I had come to see that America was still to be made; that that was a practical job; that others must supply the ideas and materials; that I must garner from the old world whatever was likely to be of use; and that, having in my possession these ideas and materials as well as those furnished by our own history, I must grasp every circumstance that offered to make them effective. I was not original. Except to the extent of realizing and implementing the phi-

losophy of the founders of the republic, we were as a nation too active practically to be very philosophical. The sequel will show how fortunate I have been. Opportunities to do what needed to be done have one after another fallen into my lap. Some sort of instinct guided me in selection and rejection. ¹

As it is thus stated, in the form of an abstraction, Flexner's philosophy may seem of too great delicacy to be called opportunism. However, the claim may be justified by some examples of the author's activities on a practical level, demonstrating his philosophy in operation and particularly, the free rein which it gave to his magnificent talent as an entrepreneur. Consider carefully Flexner's description of the series of interviews in which he persuaded George Eastman to finance the establishment of the University of Rochester School of Medicine. Flexner, who was a member of the Rockefeller supported General Education Board, was dissatisfied with the condition of the medical schools in New York State. He tried to reorganize Cornell and Columbia, but the administrators of these schools would not cooperate with him. He then determined "that the situation might be taken in the flank." ² The author decided that if one first-rate medical school were set up within the state, the pressure of competition would compel the older schools to reorganize. Events were to prove him right, but for the moment he was faced with the problem of translating his ten million dollar idea into reality. Flexner selected George Eastman, whom he had never met, as his prospective donar and arranged an interview with him through President Rhees of the University of Rochester. The three men had dinner together.

1. Ibid., p. 98.

2. Ibid., p. 285.

After an excellent dinner the three of us repaired to the study. Mr. Eastman set the ball rolling.

'I am interested in your project,' he said, 'but in these recent years I have given away \$31,000,000. What will the new school cost?'

'Eight to ten millions.'

'Let us figure on ten. I have spoken to my associate, Mr. Bowen (the name I remember). He tells me that I can spare \$2,500,000.'

'Where is the rest to come from?' I asked.

'From Mr. Rockefeller's fund.'

'In that event, it would be our school, not yours; it must be yours.'

'That is the best I can do now.'

'There's no hurry. Wait till you sell more Kodaks.'

On that note I departed to catch my train. A few days later a telegram from Mr. Eastman brought me back to Rochester. Promptly after our meeting he said:

'I have been going over things carefully. I can, I think, do a little better. I'll make it three and a half million dollars.'

There was the same objection.

'I'd like to do this thing,' Mr. Eastman said, 'and now; for I am going to Japan with Frank Vanderlip. I should like to see it settled before I go.'

'You shouldn't have said that,' I responded, 'for now I know you will go higher.'

'I will not.'

And once more I returned to New York. A few weeks later, in a handwritten note, Mr. Eastman invited me to lunch with him at his office in Kodak Park. I can see him now as he rose behind his desk, smiling and pointing his finger at me:

'I shall make you one more offer and then I never want to see your face again.'

I expressed my regret and asked for the offer.

'I'll give \$5,000,000, including the dental clinic valued at \$1,000,000, if the Board will give \$5,000,000.'

'Very well,' I said, 'that offer I will accept. But,' I added, 'beware; with one gift, we have finished, but you have just begun.'

'You are mistaken,' he replied, 'I too have finished.'

'We shall see.'

At the close of these negotiations Mr. Eastman said to me, according to a letter to my wife dated February 15, 1920, 'You are the best salesman I have ever seen.' The letter quotes him further, 'When I asked him if he would give me a job in the Kodak business he replied, 'Yes, with the highest salary ever.' Who knows but I may yet be a Kodak drummer?' ¹

In connection with the incident described above, Flexner includes in his autobiography the following letter which Mr. Eastman wrote to a friend of his named Dr. Burkhardt.

Yours of March 21st from the steamer was received yesterday, and I was amused at your account of what Flexner said. He himself is the worst highwayman that ever flitted into and out of Rochester. He put up a job on me and cleaned me out of a thundering lot of my hard-earned savings. I have just heard that he is coming up here June 2nd to speak at the graduating exercises of the allied hospitals. I have been asked to sit on the stage with him, but instead of that I shall probably flee the town for fear he will hypnotize me again. ¹

Were additional documentation necessary, many examples similar to the preceding one could be quoted herein, for a substantial part of the autobiography is taken up with them.

This analysis of Flexner, like the one of Winn, can best be concluded in the author's own words. The statement which has been selected, one that appears in the form of a letter to his friend Sir Frank Heath, is particularly appropriate for it serves two purposes; it is first, an additional reminder of the important differences in maturity and subtlety which obtain between Winn and Flexner despite their similarity; second, it is the most embracing statement of Flexner's world view

1. Ibid., pp. 287, 288.

2. Ibid., p. 290.

that he makes. It is a philosophy of enlightened pessimism.

I agree with you entirely as to the seriousness of our own and your social and intellectual situation. Somehow the world will muddle on--it did that in France after the Revolution, and is repeating the same sort of performance today in Russia. But whether human beings will ever calmly survey their situation until after it is almost past retrieve and whether human faculty is reliable enough in its operations to insure some measure of agreement on the part of persons who do thus survey the situation--of these things there is little in human experience up to now that encourages one to be very sanguine. There is nothing for us to do but to keep reminding ourselves of Kant's dictum and to go on working 'as if' -- 'as if' there were some hope that serious men would think, would come to some kind of agreement and would be able to persuade the rest of the world to reason. You and I are not young, but we have some of the buoyancy of youth and I daresay will continue our 'as if' battle until the end, but it would be a comfort to believe, if only one could, that a more rational civilization and a more rational utilization of human intelligence would characterize the world, in which our children are to grow old.¹

Among all the estimates of the future course of human affairs found in the several autobiographies discussed in this thesis, none has been more justified by events than this one of Flexner's.

In summary of this chapter these things may be said. One finds here, in relatively late autobiography, the account of experiences which have pretty well lost any identity with regionalism, experiences which are, rather, characteristic of the national and international

1. Ibid., p. 157.

role of the American entrepreneur. However, once again the Kentuckian is seen as primarily a doer rather than a theorizer; the autobiographies themselves testify to this: Flexner states specifically that he felt the task facing America to be a practical rather than a philosophical one; Colonel Winn, in that he depended upon a professional publicity man first to suggest and then to help execute his autobiography, leads his reader to infer that he was less sure of himself in a purely reflective operation than in an active one. Of course not all Kentucky autobiography is about men who were doers. Cale Young Rice was a poet and philosopher. There is, at least on the basis of the autobiographies reviewed herein, some distinction between the two categories. In the realm of the practical the Kentuckians were brilliantly successful. Colonel Winn, it is safe to say, is the most famous American in racing. Abraham Flexner, as the guiding genius in the establishment of the Institute for Advanced Study, must be accounted among the foremost administrators in American education.

Finally, the two works may be evaluated as pieces of literature. In this sense, neither is outstanding. Down the Stretch in many of its details, i. e., its authorship and its emphasis on the Kentucky Derby, may well have been what Colonel Winn first thought it to be, a publicity story. Among the unimaginative, factual autobiographies which predominate in this study, I Remember is good; but how far short it falls of being a genuine work of art can be best understood by contrasting it with the work which will be analyzed next, Jesse Stuart's Beyond Dark Hills.

CHAPTER SIX

BEYOND DARK HILLS. THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF JESSE STUART AS AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF KENTUCKY

Probably the most brilliant piece in the annals of Kentucky autobiography is Jesse Stuart's Beyond Dark Hills.¹ This work is being considered in a separate chapter not only because its incomparable superiority to any of the autobiographies discussed so far earns for it a special treatment, but also because it combines the qualities of all these previous works, is a whole of which these other autobiographies are only the parts and requires, therefore, an altogether new classification. Jesse Stuart's Beyond Dark Hills may be called "artistic autobiography." Furthermore, Beyond Dark Hills is particularly suited for concluding this study of Kentucky autobiography because it is the climactic achievement of the first two centuries of that literature. Not only is it a late work, chronologically, and a superior work in terms of quality, but, in that it combines so much of the experience of these other autobiographies, it constitutes an inclusive summary of the main ideas contained in this thesis.

The most important idea concerning Mr. Stuart's autobiography which will be established in this discussion is that this work, in an allegorical sense, is not just the life of an individual but constitutes an autobiography of Kentucky. To phrase this idea in other terms, it can be said that a person by reading only this one autobiography by Mr. Stuart would encounter every important characteristic, would recognize every major theme which can be derived from an extensive reading in the whole of

1. Stuart, Jesse, Beyond Dark Hills, New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1938.

Kentucky autobiographical literature. To itemize the predominant elements of Jesse Stuart's work which give it this universality, one finds, first, that the work embraces an extensive chronology. Beyond Dark Hills begins with the immigration of the author's forefathers into Kentucky in the early part of the nineteenth century, when the state was still a primitive frontier, and outlines the family history into the present era. Mr. Stuart's prose style is one of utmost simplicity. He uses short words and brief sentences, but achieves a great intensity in his writing by this very economy and by the fresh meanings he finds in familiar words. In this simple phraseology Mr. Stuart carries on a tradition in Kentucky autobiography for which the term primitive has been suggested herein. As Mr. Stuart recounts his life, the pattern of interests noted in Chapter Two of this thesis begins to emerge, for the narrative is essentially a recital of wandering, of concern with religion, of unceasing violence, and of obsession with the problem of earning a living. There is a small but persistent thread of confession, a consciousness of shame, running through the work. And, finally, there is a growing intellectual awareness, a rebellion against the previously established primary pattern, an intellectual development stimulated by travel, and, later, becoming itself the stimulator, one leading to further travel, and increasing rebellion. The nature of this intellectual development and the accompanying rebellion is worth noting for, again, it was not a purely personal variant, but, rather, may be likened to the experiences recorded in other Kentucky autobiography. Among the first experiences to arouse Jesse Stuart was the impingement on his simple agrarian consciousness of the techniques and

way of life of urban, industrialized civilization. Partly by his own choice, partly from an economic necessity that was not unique for him but was imposed by the unfolding of social forces in which, however little he might understand them, he was nonetheless involved, Jesse Stuart set out blindly to participate in this industrial world, then withdrew in revulsion from his brutal experiences in the steel mills at Ashland. In no part of this work is the author's skill as a dramatic writer better exemplified than in the portrayal of his reaction as a simple, uninitiated farm boy to the inexorable discipline of the machine. Interestingly enough, although Mr. Stuart's rebellion led him first into industry and then into another realm of urban experience, the university, he reacted against these more disciplined life patterns and ultimately returned to the farm. Thus, symbolically the rebellion failed, for the challenge lay "beyond dark hills." In anticipation of the analysis that follows it is desirable to keep one point in mind which forms a master-key to the understanding of Mr. Stuart's work. This basic point is the social attitude of the author and emphasis may be added to the definition of that attitude by the fact that it is summarized in general terms by Professor Wilbur J. Cash in his work The Mind of the South.¹ Professor Cash, although he defined what his studies indicated to be the characteristic attitude of Southerners generally and not of Mr. Stuart in particular, nevertheless arrived at an analysis which describes the point of view revealed in Beyond Dark Hills.²

... the Southerner's primary approach

1. Cash, W. J., Op. cit.

2. Stuart, Jesse, Op. cit.

to his world was not through the idea of class. He never really got around in his subconsciousness to thinking of himself as being, before all else, a member of a caste, with interests and purposes in conflict with the interests and purposes of other castes. ... Rather, he saw with essentially naive, direct and personal eyes. Rather, his world, as he beheld it, remained always, in its basic aspect, a simple aggregation of human units, of self-contained and self-sufficient entities¹

Jesse Stuart begins his autobiography with an outline of his family history. In the first paragraph of the book a pattern of interests familiar from other Kentucky autobiography begins to appear.

I do not authentically know when it was that six tall Scottish Highland brothers left the Firth of Forth to come to America. All I know is that they came. For a short time they settled in Burkes Gardens, Virginia. Then for no well-known reason, apparently for no reason at all, these six Highland brothers left Burkes Gardens and settled in Wythville, Virginia. It was here the clan was broken. One brother died and was buried at Wythville; one went to Wyoming; ... one pushed into Kentucky and settled on the Big Sandy River

And the tall Scotsman, Raphy Stuart, ... that came to the Big Sandy Valley was my great-grandfather.²

Mr. Stuart's description of his mother's antecedents brings out another characteristic element, that of religion. "The Hiltons were distinguished in the mountains for being good preachers (Baptists), and for being 'good larners.'"³ The author describes his father's lineage and yet another familiar subject appears.

I shall ... give you a word picture of this figure of earth. [Mr. Stuart's grandfather,

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1. Cash, W. J., Op. cit., p. 35.
 2. Stuart, Jesse, Op. cit., p. 13.
 3. Ibid., p. 13.

Mitchell Stuart]. He was married at eighteen. He joined the Federal army at the age of twenty. He joined the North because the recruiting station for soldiers for Northern armies was nearer. He just wanted to fight. ¹

In one individual, the author's great-grandfather Hilton, occurs a coincidence of three of the four characteristic preoccupations. "He was a lover of books, a school teacher, a farmer, a warrior and preacher" ² Jesse Stuart himself, in his boyhood, lived in an environment which preserved this pattern traditional with his ancestors. His parents were constantly on the move, never traveling far, yet never establishing themselves in one homestead. The author describes this movement vividly:

Again my mother said: 'I cannot stand this place any longer. We must move on.' My father rented another place. We had cleaned this farm up and run some new fences. We had made it possible for other people to live there. So it was time for us to move on. ³

And with this constant migration came inevitably the concomitant of an obsessive concern with money and the business of farming. But the interest in economic matters has undergone a telling change paralleling and reflecting an important historical change in the economic situation of the nation as a whole. The concern with commerce is no longer an optimistic fascination with the possibility of exploiting a new land to acquire great wealth, but is, rather, an intent, even desperate, preoccupation with acquiring the necessities of life. As will be seen in a moment, this change, although it does not disrupt the basic pattern, does begin to modify its constituents, particularly the conception of God. Mr. Stuart recalls that his early interest in natural beauty was frustrated

1. Ibid., p. 14.

2. Ibid., p. 24.

3. Ibid., p. 40.

by the pressure of work.

But we had no time to play with flowers.
Spring was on us and we had to get land cleared
for spring plowing. We had to get corn and
potatoes in the ground. They were the staples
and other things mattered less-- corn and
potatoes mean life in the hills. ¹

The author earned the money to pay his way to high school by
killing wild animals.

... one night I remember getting four
skunks and one opossum. I made money that
night. I hunted over those hills night after
night during the autumn season.

... I sold the opossums. I sold them
to negroes and I got the hides back. One ship-
ment of fur I recall getting forty-three dol-
lars for. ²

Violence, too, was familiar to Jesse Stuart. Not only did he have
to earn the money to enter school but he had to fight the other boys to
remain. The author describes a fight in which the school bully defeated
him, and his savage feeling after the engagement. "Then flashes of mad-
ness would return to me and I would want to kill Rawl Briswell. At least
I made up my mind to hit him and hit him hard." ³ Mr. Stuart secretly
trained himself in boxing and then fought his antagonist again. In his
autobiography he records the remarks of a witness. "Did you hear about
that Stuart boy beefing that Briswell boy? I took the wad of tobacco out
of his mouth and that was the whitest boy I've ever seen. He hit him hard
enough to kill." ⁴ Finally, the pattern of the author's early environment
is completed by a dominant concern with primitive religious passion.
Among the most intense passages in the autobiography, passages whose
distinctive power illustrates the reason this work is entitled to be

1. Ibid., p. 41.

2. Ibid., p. 57.

3. Ibid., p. 66.

4. Ibid., p. 67.

called artistic autobiography, are those containing Jesse Stuart's description of his early religious experience. One chapter entitled "God and the Evening Sky" is devoted to the subject.

When I think of God, I think of the evening sky in Kentucky. When I was a child in the hills of northeast Kentucky and living in a log shack near Cedar Riffles, I would ask my mother, 'Can God ride on one of the white clouds up in the sky?' I would see a white cloud in the shape of a bear's head or a mountain top or in the shape of a scaly monster. My mother would say: 'Yes, God can do anything.' 'Can he see through that plum tree out there in the garden?' She would say: 'Yes, God can do anything.' Then I would say: 'Well, God is a great man if he can do things like that. But I am afraid some of these days he will fall off the clouds and hurt himself when he falls to the ground. Then without God the earth will come to an end.'

Then I would wish I was God. I could ride on the clouds. I could see through the trees. I could do things that Glen Hilton could not do.¹

Here, very clearly, is an intimate, earthy conception in which the notion of man as God, and God as a superior man are easily interchanged. But, as has already been suggested, the God has begun to lose his earlier benevolence, is no longer the providential agent co-operating in the business enterprises of his people. Rather, he has become a punitive God of wrath.

... I had come to know my first lesson about God. He was a man one could not get away from. If you did not walk on a straight line God did not want you and the Devil got you with a pitchfork. There was no getting away from a man that rode the clouds and saw through a tree. I was afraid to lie. I was afraid to steal. I was afraid of God.²

Mr. Stuart describes a religious meeting at the Plum Grove Church near his home. He departs from transcribing his purely personal reaction

1. Ibid., p. 72.

2. Ibid., p. 74.

to give a social view of the subject.

Everybody there had the same picture of God. He was a strong man that rode the clouds. He saw through a tree. He took the good people home and sent the bad people to the Devil. God and the Devil were at war. They had many fights there at Plum Grove. ¹

As this passage continues, there emerges a confirmation of the idea advanced herein that a definite pattern of experience tends to recur in Kentucky autobiography. With a naturalness that carries a suggestion of inevitability, this description of a religious meeting blends into an episode of violence.

But on the outside of the house [church] the Devil had his gang. There would be dark ghostly figures of earth prowling around over the churchyard and looking in at the windows. They would come to the church to shoot and drink and fight with knives and razors in old dirty work clothes. The fronts of their shirts would be open and one could see their hairy chests -- figures of earth-- grim and daring-- they feared not man, nor God nor the Devil. There would be quarrels and wicked curses and sour smells of rotten breaths and whisky fumes in the night air. And one could hear whispers-- low whispers: 'There's going to be hell here tonight. ... There'll be blood before this thing is over.' ²

It has been suggested that a thread of confession is discernible in Jesse Stuart's autobiography. This aspect of his writing must be handled with some precision to avoid overstatement. It would be more accurate perhaps to describe this quality as shame or even defiance, yet a moment's reflection will show that these latter attitudes partake of the idea of confession. It has been said, and it will be shown

1. Ibid., p. 82.

2. Ibid., p. 85.

later in this discussion that Mr. Stuart was a rebel, that he abandoned and repudiated the way of life which was his inheritance. In this action, and particularly in his explanation of it, lies the soundest argument for defining his work as being partially a confession, because in rebellion, the dissenter, however justified, betrays by his need to explain, a consciousness of being out of step, an uneasiness at being alone, a feeling of guilt. The first instance of this attitude of confession appears in the author's account of his family.

I would rather not go back and discuss the Stuart family again. I love to talk about the Hiltons. But there is more to say about the Stuarts even if it is often embarrassing and a sad thing to reflect on when I begin to realize that I am only a chip off the old block... . It was no wonder that my grandfather Hilton cried out frantically: 'My heavens, my daughter is marrying an outlaw when she marries Mitchell Stuart.' He had a right to say that, knowing the Stuarts, but it did not turn out to be true.¹

The reader frequently encounters little admissions like the following one, misdemeanors which are of no great consequence in themselves but whose inclusion in the autobiography is difficult to account for if the idea of confession is excluded. The following episode occurred during the author's enlistment in the army, a phase of his life which will be given further consideration in another place.

I stop at the Army Library ... and find a book called Carlyle's Essay on Burns I ask to buy the book. 'We can't sell any of the library books You'll have to buy one some place where they sell books.' I put the book back and when the librarian was not looking I put it under my sweater and carried it out. I found out, going back on the train, that the book was great reading for me.²

1. Ibid., p.14

2. Ibid., p.128

As an illustration of humor coinciding with pathos, one of these little acknowledgements is a fine example. Mr. Stuart is describing a poem he had written:

Later I found a one-stanza poem in
my coat pocket I called it 'Stanza
on Leaving College.' [Subtitle: Written
in Dejection] But I had never been to
college. I only dreamed of the day when
I could go. ¹

The most valuable and important aspect of Jesse Stuart's autobiography is the record of his intellectual development. The lucidity and insight with which he records this element of his experience makes the document immensely more useful for the interpretation of Kentucky intellectual life as related to the cultural and social conditions in this state, than any of the works discussed in the chapter "Intellectual Autobiography." It is not intended here to become deeply involved in the intricate problem of whether Stuart's intellectual development is purely an outgrowth of social forces working on him or whether his achievements derive simply from his own genius. One point is clear. This writer's intellectual growth was the result of his rebellion against the primitive pattern of life which has been illustrated in this discussion. And from this premise it can be concluded, in a general way, that the strength and power for Mr. Stuart's intellectual development had its source within himself but that its direction of growth was influenced by the culture and society in which it was evolved.

The first sign of rebellion, as yet unaccompanied by evidence of the latent intellectual forces which it would release, appears in Jesse Stuart's description of an episode which occurred when he was still a

1. Ibid., p. 152.

boy.

Some of you will remember the heavy snow that fell in April of that spring. [1918]. My father and I were walking to the barn. I refused to step in his tracks any more, as I had done before when there were deep snows. I made a path of my own. I said to myself: 'You are a man of the hills. You have let them hold you in. You were born among them -- you'll die among them. You'll go to that pine grove where we went less than two months ago. You will lie there forever in that soil. Your night will then have come when man's work is over. Since you have brought us into the world, isn't there some place where we can escape from fevers? Can't we move to a place where we can get a doctor easier? There two of my brothers are dead and sleeping over there by that pine grove. Don't they have the same right as I have to be here? Now they are gone, I repeat. Life for them was a tragedy. They had better not cost my mother the pain of birth -- dying young when it can be prevented. I have had pneumonia twice and typhoid twice. I was able to survive them. It was because I was strong. Now these hills will not always hold me. I shall go beyond them someday.' ¹

In this quotation appears the seed of rebellion. The following year the author did leave the farm -- for only a brief time -- and went into Greenup, Kentucky, a small town true enough, but still a tiny fragment of urban civilization. And immediately the process of social conditioning began to mold the previously undefined form of the author's rebellion.

That summer I went back to the farm, It was not the same place. I wanted to think about the town over the bony ridge -- Greenup. I could see that white concrete and the yellow leaves drifting over it. I could see the happy, well-dressed girls going along talking about nothing in particular. There was that flashy red sweater Burl Mavis wore. I could see Fred Mansfield's pretty necktie. Lord, there was lots to live for and the world was big. ²

1. Ibid., p. 40.

2. Ibid., p. 50.

Observe particularly, in the preceding passage, the incidence of objects uniquely typical of an industrial society which appeal to the author's imagination, notably "white concrete."

After this experience, Mr. Stuart's rebellion, assuming its intellectual form, began in earnest. He turned his thinking upon his old way of life, upon the pattern of violence, religion, migration and work which had persisted among some Kentuckians for two centuries, a way of life which, indeed, was suspended somewhere between the frontier and settled agrarian stages almost a century after those forms had become generally obsolete in the industrialized civilization of America. The first object of his appraisal was the element of religion, which he began to interpret in terms of its contradiction with commerce.

I wondered if God ever came to the tobacco fields and watched the people hoe tobacco and wipe sweat with big red handkerchiefs. God's men preached against tobacco. ... It was an evil weed they all preached. ... Then I would think: 'What is the use of this weed? The preacher said God made everything and made it for a purpose. Why did he put this weed here then? Did he do it so country people would toil and sweat and make a little living out among the lonely hills? Or did he do it so that rich men could pass the evil weeds as a token of friendship, of courtesy to men in making a big deal easier to go over?' I knew what I would do. I would go and ask the Reverend Finnis. ... He said: 'Son, don't you use that weed. It is an evil weed. It is the Devil's own work. The Lord didn't make the tobacco plant. It was the Devil. Before the Lord ever saved me, that stuff had rotted out all my teeth and took lots of my nickels and dimes.' ¹

1. Ibid., p. 80.

The outcome of these reflections, however, was inconclusive. Examining the world "with ... naive, direct and simple eyes," to recall a phrase from the quotation by Professor W. J. Cash presented earlier in this chapter, led Jesse Stuart only to confusion, a failure which, as will be seen, became characteristic of the author's rebellion and which, ultimately, abridged its potential magnitude.

Tobacco fields -- Kentucky tobacco fields and Sunday School and God. My mind is in a muddle. Man has to raise the wicked plant for a living. God doesn't want him to do it. It is a plant of the Devil. Yet what better does God offer among the hills? The timber is disappearing. The moonshine still has been partly closed. The corn and cane sell for low prices. Where is the money? Man has to live. ¹

The change in the author's attitude is intuitive and emotional as much as it is intellectual when he reaffirms his intention to leave his native environment.

These are my people I am of their flesh and blood. I am one of them. I am a product of the hills and the tobacco fields upon the steep hillsides and down in the lonely hollows between the hills. I have watched them and felt as they felt over religion. But I have finished high school now and it has changed me some. I see no use in it all. Though I stand not against it, I am not contented with my lot on the Kentucky soil. I told my father in the chip yard one night that fifty acres of land could not hold me. ²

On the basis of the background material which has now been assembled, it is possible to consider Jesse Stuart's intellectual

1. Ibid., p. 81.

2. Ibid., p. 95.

manifesto. This declaration is philosophical in nature and does not explicitly touch on any of the subjects so far referred to. Yet its essentially agrarian and emotional character betrays its relevance to the analysis which has preceded it. The passage is doubly meaningful when it is recalled that it is the expression of a creative artist. Much of the imagination and poetic quality of the autobiography finds its roots in this thinking.

At an early age on one of my walks in the Kentucky hills I thought a great thought. I believe today it was a great thought. It was this: People last only a short time. Nature plays a trick on them. She stays young forever. The leaves come forth on the trees at spring's rebirth. They flower during the summer season. They wither in the autumn and tumble to the ground. Then the trees rest for a night -- winter. Again they awake with spring's rebirth and flower in their season. Not so with man. His youth is spring-time; middle age his summer. He flowers then. Autumn comes and his flesh begins to wither, his shoulders lower, his beauty decays, and then winter comes when he sleeps. He awakes to flower no more. His work is done. Night comes when man works no more.

Well, the seasons came over and over again in the hills and these thoughts returned just as often to me. They have inspired me. They have told me to flower in my season. To bear in mind autumn would come and winter would follow, the time when man would work no more. ¹

No single experience recorded in Beyond Dark Hills shows so clearly the contradictions in Mr. Stuart's thinking as his comments on the army. His reaction shows a beginning of class-consciousness which is aborted before any far-reaching change in his world view is achieved. The author,

1. Ibid., p. 35.

motivated largely by a wish to travel, enlisted in the army for summer training at Camp Knox. The experience was not gratifying.

... Camp Knox was a torture to me. ... I did not conform very well to military rules and regulations. ¹

The place [practice range at Camp Knox] was one of complete devastation. All of this had been caused by practice on how to kill men. It all seemed queer to me. ... ²

Just as Mr. Stuart, when he was doubtful of religion, had questioned a minister, so now he turned to an army officer to explain his bewilderment at organized violence.

One day I asked an officer: 'Why is it man is shown how to kill man? He is taught the scientific use of firearms Yet, out around a bar, two hours before he killed him, he would sit down and talk with the man if he had a chance.' 'Our country has to have protection.' It looked pretty damn foolish to me. I made up my mind to salute no more uniforms. Protection of a country! Many men had fallen and bled because a few told them to fight. Everybody ought to rebel and there would be no more wars. It all looked so futile to me. Men fighting for presidents and kings and big holders of ammunition plants! ... I rebelled against the whole works. ... I would take a dishonorable discharge To hell with it all! ³

To the positive direction of thought suggested by these beginnings, Mr. Stuart suddenly juxtaposes an entirely different conception which offsets this apparent departure.

'Much as I have said against war,' I think, 'no country could invade my country and slaughter my people unless they'd do it over my dead body. If a country is not worth fighting for, it is not worth living in. Just to think, my home and my people among the hills that I have always known, the trees, briars,

1. Ibid., p. 53.
 2. Ibid., p. 122.
 3. Ibid.

brush, rocks and wild flowers thereon, are these not worth fighting for? ...' 1

Left thus undeveloped, in what is essentially a perceptual level of thinking, these ideas obviously contradict each other. A more theoretical analysis of society which would be necessary to unify them into a coherent, systemitized world view is lacking. Yet the author is satisfied to leave this conflict unresolved. "Paradox," as Professor Cash has said, "is the essence of popular thinking." 2

The most poignant and vital chapter in the book, both as a narrative of personal experience and as a reflection of one aspect of the social development of Kentucky, is Jesse Stuart's description of his adventures in the steel mill town of Ashland. The treatment of the story is artistic, an artistry springing from a vivid, imaginative re-creation of life in the mills. Furthermore, the writer is specific and realistic in his treatment. Mr. Stuart did not like his job and the intensity of this central reality is strengthened by the omission of any impersonal generalizations on the significance of industrialism as an aesthetic, social, or economic force in the modern world.

The author describes his job.

When I went in the shed I was put on the shears. It was a long machine that trimmed the edges off the thin slabs of steel. It was a place where, when you went to sleep on the job, you lost a foot or hand. 3

And all I could hear when I went to the Radnor Home to sleep at night was the sound of steel battering steel and the cries of working men, the zooming cranes and the tractor motors pull-

1. Ibid., p. 133.

2. Cash, W. J., Op. cit., p. x.

3. Stuart, Jesse, Op. cit., p. 138.

ing steel. The deadly rumble of the shears cutting steel and the soft oozing sounds of the oilers.

'Get to hell from under that crane! The hook on the left there has slipped! She's coming down! Get to hell out of there! Clear out, men! Watch that load of steel coming down! Oh, hell, it got a man's foot. Poor devil! One of these five cranes here get a man a day. You see it pays to be careful around here. ... When he gets well the Armco will have no more use for a man with one foot. No, they'll not give him a job for the rest of his days. That's too much on the company to give a job of sweeping floors for a lifetime just because his foot and his sweat and blood went into the steel.' ¹

Mr. Stuart does not show the indecision in his attitude toward industrialism that he did toward war. Furthermore, he is vehemently anti-romantic in his appraisal of this aspect of his experience.

Get Carl Sandburg to tell you about it. He knows. He's the singer of steel. And I am almost positive that Carl Sandburg has never worked a day in the steel mills in his life. ... Carl Sandburg, I've got a question to ask you: 'Have you jerked hot slabs of steel on a track with a long hook and licked salt like a cow to make you sweat? Have you singed your eyebrows with the heat of steel and the wisps of hair that fell over your forehead when you stooped down? Tell me Carl Sandburg, have you? I am reading your books because I work in steel now. I know you never worked in steel.

'If you worked there, you had a snap. Carl Sandburg, you don't know anything about steel. You got your ideas from walking around the mills at night or talking to the mayor of Gary, Indiana. ... Carl Sandburg, lay off writing about steel. ... And whatever you do, quit singing about the beauty of steel.' ²

Once again the theme of rebellion, now against the contemporary form of commerce, appears in Mr. Stuart's writing.

1. Ibid., p. 139.

2. Ibid., p. 141.

I go to the Radnor Home to sleep.
 I hear the rumble of steel all the way.
 Like a bullet the sound is shooting through
 my head. But I am out in the night air walk-
 ing toward the Radnor Home. There is nothing
 but a pillar of fire over the mills I have
 left and the stacks from the furnace look
 like pop bottles. I'd like to have a hand
 big enough to pick up the pop bottles and
 break them against the earth. I'd do it.
 I'd like to have a toe big enough to
 kick the white metal sheds over. I'd do
 it. I'd tell the men to go back to the
 soil and make their bread. Lay off this
 steel game for a while and rest their bodies. ¹

Here, as before, the rebellion assumes its characteristic form.
 Jesse Stuart's reaction against industrialism is the direct and un-
 workable response of a man viewing his world, "with ... naive, direct
 and personal eyes." ²

The author is conscious of the social toll which the steel mill
 exacts and expands his narrative to embrace the lives of those who work
 with him, again an incipient class feeling.

Men would get dead drunk down in the
 'Hell Hole.' I'd help put them to bed. I
 hated to see the cops get them. They'd lose
 their jobs. ... They were not such bad fellows.
 Steel had taken the good there was out of them.
 That game of steel is a game of pure hell.

Their lives were cramped. All the poor
 devils knew was steel, furnaces, the deadly
 rumble of machinery all day long. Steel, sweat,
 blood, and steel! Life was monotonous. Why not
 drink whisky and shoot out the windowpanes?
 Why not do something for a change? Tear up the
 place -- fight each other, fight the law! Life
 was ugly and dirty and dwarfed as the little
 ragweeds growing at the edge of the metal
 sheds. They were covered with soot and grew
 weakly where the rain could hardly fall. Those
 men's lives were just dwarfed like the rag-
 weeds. Their faces wore the blank expressions

1. *Ibid.*, p. 142.

2. Cash, W. J., *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

of the Armco plant's shotgun dwelling houses.
It was a terrible mess.¹

Jesse Stuart shows the hopelessness of a simple, personal revolt against the machine by describing the pathetic action of a steelworker who, like himself, conceived of a rebellion against the industrial system only in terms of violent individual action.

Night after night Felix came to the shop drinking. One night he got Brown drunk and Brown tried to tear the air hammer up with a sledge hammer. 'Goddam air hammer -- damn black monster! I'll break your slats out with a sledge hammer. Damn you, you killed Dennis Harkreader but you'll never kill another man. Goddam you.'²

Jesse Stuart fled from the steel mills, fled leaving the problem unsolved, and with that experience is marked the beginning of his withdrawal to his old way of life. He tried one other form of the more complex social life lying "beyond dark hills," that of the university. And here he was again unable to achieve integration. The title of the first chapter treating his university experience is "Beware: Books Hurt the Flesh." In this chapter he already betrays an inclination toward the abandonment of his intellectual revolt, a desire to go back to the old life.

I do believe books hurt the flesh. ... I was happy here [home] until I went away to school. I was dissatisfied because I was so ignorant when I measured my ways with other people's! And I want to know more and more. I can't learn enough facts to suit myself and my teachers. What good do they do? They make me dissatisfied. They help me to know that these quiet things I left are the best after all. There is something good about the old country life that is passing. It is the real sweetness of living down against the soil. And that life will never come again.³

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1. Stuart, Jesse, Op. cit., p. 156.
 2. Ibid., p. 168.
 3. Ibid., p. 200.

The remainder of Mr. Stuart's narrative is brief and the outcome has already been indicated. After a short stay at his parents' farm, he ventured out once again, this time entering Vanderbilt University at Nashville, Tennessee. At Vanderbilt, where this autobiography was written, his former experiences "beyond dark hills" were essentially repeated. In a chapter symbolically entitled "A Stranger and Afraid," the author describes how his attempt to earn a Master's degree failed, partly from economic difficulties, partly from an inability to adjust intellectually to the discipline of college life. Within a year he returned home, permanently, insofar as the autobiography tells. Viewed as a whole, Beyond Dark Hills is, for the reasons that have been explored in this chapter, principally its artistic power, incomparably superior to any other work discussed in this thesis.

The problem of concluding this study is difficult. In what terms should the conclusion be cast? Probably the ideal method would be to contrast all of these works, as a developing body of literature, with the standard autobiography in world literature. Unfortunately, this plan is beyond the scope of the writer. Since it is thus necessary to summarize Kentucky autobiography in terms of itself, the problem becomes one of fixing upon a point or standard to which the total body of these works may be referred. The most eligible choice for this measure is obviously Jesse Stuart's work. Yet even it is not wholly desirable; in surveying an area of literature such as this one of Kentucky autobiography, it is reassuring to have somewhere crossed a boundary line where the subject clearly ends or reveals a fundamental change. When a definite demarcation is

discovered within a subject, the task of division, classification, and evaluation can be performed with some conviction.¹ An indisputable boundary is nowhere clearly evident among the eighteen autobiographies collected herein. True enough, Beyond Dark Hills, for reasons made clear in this last chapter, is distinct from all the works which preceded it. It is the only selection in the group which could be called, with dignity, a work of literature. The remainder, excepting Timothy Flint's autobiography, are mediocre or worse. This emergence, after an interval of two centuries, of a distinctly new kind of Kentucky autobiography suggests that the present era may be the one in which the first major, i. e., boundary line, change occurs. With the evidence of only one work this remains a speculation. The only other semblance of an important division among the works discussed in this thesis appears between the travel-adventure group and the several categories which follow it. It was in the absence, therefore, of any clearly organic divisions that the empirical classifications which have been made herein were determined. That they are only moderately satisfactory, that the autobiographies could be reclassified equally well in other ways is obvious. That any greater unity could be obtained beyond the rough approximation pragmatically achieved herein is doubtful. In this retrospective comment on the organization of the thesis appears the final difficulty of formulating a summary. The divergence among the autobiographies is so great that no one plan of attack could be adhered to for every work. Rather the exegesis in each case had to be adjusted to take advantage of whatever qualities the autobiography could supply. One of the objectives described in the

1. A familiar example is the division of Greek sculpture into the archaic, the classical, and the baroque.

beginning of this thesis was to determine what reflections of Kentucky culture, if any, appeared in the autobiographical literature. In this respect a fairly well-defined pattern did occur. In the autobiography of the era from 1750 to about 1825 the experiences recorded consistently involve migration, violence, commerce, and religion. In the later autobiography centering around the turn of the nineteenth century this pattern had definitely changed. Migration in the sense of adventurous wandering virtually disappeared. The attitude toward religion had modified; there were expressions of skepticism by Flexner and Stuart, and outright revolt by Culleton. The primitive violence of earlier times was less frequent in actual occurrence but, interestingly, was not forgotten; there is scarcely an author in the whole group who does not relate an anecdote describing some episode of violence. The concern with commerce persists but in a modified form. The old lust to lay one's hands on the rich natural wealth of the frontier and turn it to the sustenance of human life gave way to more subtle enterprise which was concerned with the manipulation of complex and often intangible values. Thus whereas Thomas Walker and George Ogden looked at the rivers and forests of Kentucky and pondered how they could be converted into navigable waterways and town sites, Irvin Cobb and Matt Winn speculated in psychological goods-- the former in literary works which would sell "to a nation dedicated to business," the latter in providing his fellow men with an opportunity "to play the horses of their choice."

However, to offset these variations, Kentucky autobiography al-

so argues for a certain unchanging consistency in Kentucky culture. There is evidence of what Thorstein Veblen termed a conservation of archaic traits. Even in so late a work as Jesse Stuart's Beyond Dark Hills there is, as has been shown, an unmistakable repetition of the fundamental pattern found in the autobiography of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. If one word will describe the values and attitudes which form the core of that persistent quality in Kentucky autobiography and hence Kentucky culture, it is romanticism. From the optimism of the first pioneers to Colonel Winn's vision of Churchill Downs in an autumn sunset, the evidence of a strong romantic current in this autobiographical literature is abundant. To cite just one example, it may be recalled that every figure represented in the chapter on the intellectual autobiography was a romantic. Irvin Cobb called himself one. On Miss J. R. Bere's authority as well as on the evidence of his autobiography, Cale Rice was a romantic poet. Mr. Rice himself tells us that Annie Fellows Johnston's novels were being excluded from public libraries on the grounds of sentimentality. Alice Hegan Rice denounced the naturalistic movement in contemporary fiction. There are, of course, exceptions to the romantic tendency described above. Compare, for example, Christopher Gist's detached account of the murder of a white woman by the Indians with Jereboam O. Beauchamp's attitude, seventy-five years later, toward the seduction of Ann Cook. John Culleton's Ten Years a Priest; an Open Confession is certainly devoid of romanticism.

One other point remains to be made in this conclusion. It should be recalled that an attempt at integration was made in this thesis

from the standpoint of literary quality. In this feature the standard was generally so poor as to provide little ground for comment. As a final statement it may be said that the nature of the subject was such as to produce a study which has been primarily descriptive rather than analytical.

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